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COVER :

ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFREY LYNCH

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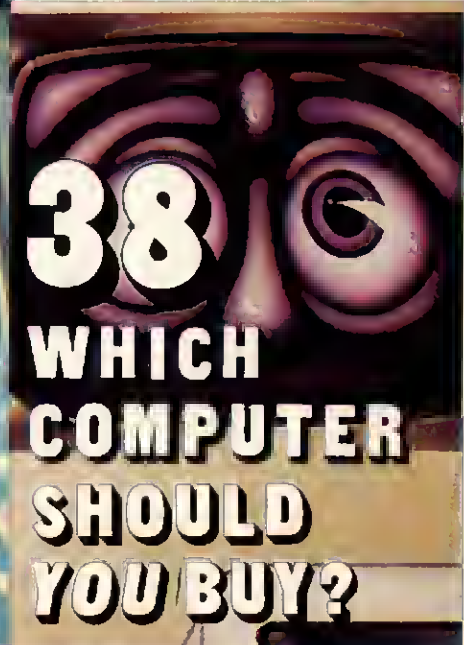
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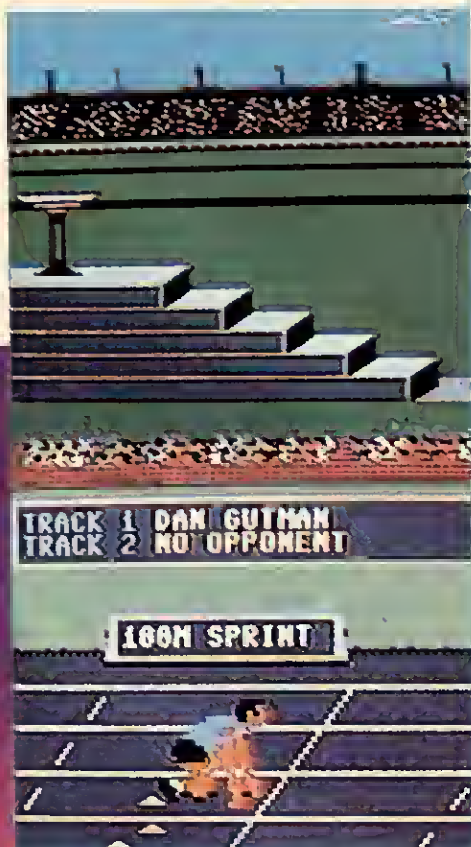
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## COMPUTER GAME BUYERS GUIDE

By Shay Addams

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### AND EAT YOUR SPINACH!

I'm an Atari 400 owner, and I've been arguing with my mother about which is better, the Commodore 64 or the Atari 400/800. I say it's the C-64. Could you tell me?

Robert Carroll

*Never argue with your mother. The woman is a saint.*

### FREE SOFTWARE?!

I have heard about public domain software for Apple computers and was wondering how to get some.

Jeff Peterson

Check out a users' group called CALL A.P.P.L.E. They're at 21246 68th Ave. S., Kent, WA 98032.

### THE BEAR FACTS

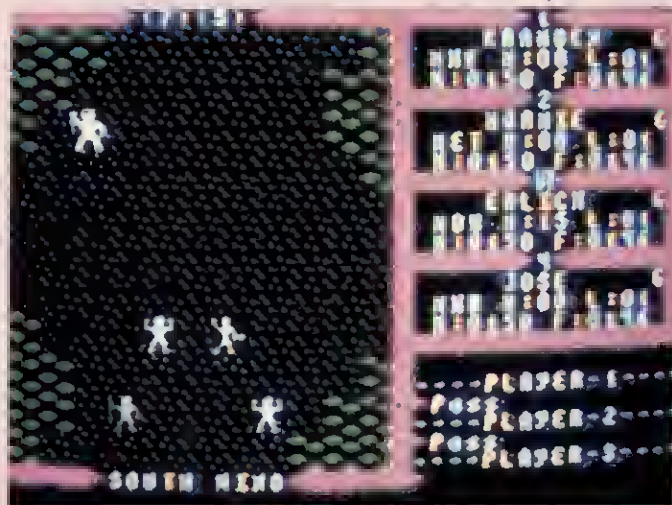
In your July 1984 issue, you said that the grisly hanging scene was removed from *Cliff Hanger*. I'm sure you saw your error when you spelled grisly (gruesome) as grizzly (bear). I had to read it twice to understand it. I don't mean to be picky, but I actually thought they had hung a bear!

Michael Mahon

### GET SET, GO!

In your *Beat It* on *Track & Field*, you said that the game ends after six events. That's not true! If you qualify on the high jump, you're placed on a pedestal and told what place you came in. It starts all over again with high qualifying times. Thanks to your tips I found this out. Keep up the good work.

Terry Schaedler



### HOW TO...

Please send me information about magazines, books and articles that explain how to create and design games.

Segir Laurear

Chris Crawford, who wrote the classic war game *Eastern Front* for the Atari, has a new book called *The Art of Computer Game Design* (Osborne/McGraw Hill) that you should investigate. There are dozens of others devoted to specific computers, many of which are available from Computer Magazines' book division.

*Getting killed can be a pleasure in Ultima III (top). If you make two scenario disks, your characters will live to fight another day. Above, the GRISLY hanging scene from Cliff Hanger.*

### IF YOU SAY SO

In your last issue, you called Lucasfilms' first game *Ballblazer*. The true name is *Ballblaster*. Another Lucasfilm game is their second release, *Behind Jaggi Lines*.

Ricky Perkins

*You are wrong, byte-brain.*

### BEAT BUTCH

I just read the letter Butch Bundick sent you, saying he got 475,487 on *Dragon's Lair*. Well, sorry, Butch, but I scored over a million more than that three times, so eat your heart out too, Butch. If you don't believe me, I'll send a photo of the score just before it turns to a million.

Craig Flannagan

### BLISTERING!

I am writing this letter to tell you I got 1,963,310 on *Munchman* for the VIC-20. The only reason I stopped playing was because I got a sore finger.

David Grant  
(Computer Wizard)

*David, we really don't care.*

### ULTIMA III TIP

Hey! Huey, Louie and Dewey are dead! So is Orc-Crusher! For the 37th time this week! How do I keep my characters from getting killed in *Ultima III*? It's very frustrating to have to recreate them over and over.

Jeff Beck

Chill out, Jeff. The player's manual doesn't mention this, but you can make two scenario disks. After creating a party of explorers and setting forth into Sosaria, save the game on both disks. Do this each time you make some progress or quit for awhile. Then if anyone in the group gets wasted by a wizard, all you have to do is quit, reboot the program disk and start over with the back up scenario disk. Of course, the first thing to do at this point is remove that disk, insert the other scenario and save your progress again, ensuring that you'll have another back-up. Now, go kill some orcs for the Gipper!

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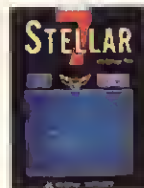
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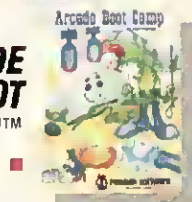
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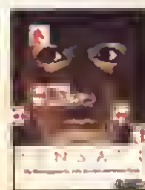


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## HOT GOSSIP

Where is **Airheart**, **Dan Gorlin**'s long-awaited sequel to **Choplifter**? It's been two years now... **Robin Williams** showed up at the West Coast Computer Faire this year and informed reporters he has an **Apple IIe** and **Atari 800** at home... **Intellivision** is now owned by **Revco**, the largest drugstore chain in the U.S. They say they'll release new games. **Suurre**... Remember **Astrocade**? They say they're back in business, with new hardware and software on the way. **Suurre**... **Activision** hasn't exactly purchased **Gamestar** (*Star League Baseball*), but they will "provide distribution and marketing support" for the smaller company... Did you know there are 70 ways to die in **Infocom's Sorcerer**? That tops all their other games, including **Zork I** (28), **Planetfall** (41), and **Deadline** (2). Keep an eye out for their next one—**The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy**... In **Bob Woodward's Wired** book about **John Belushi**, he mentions that **Hugh Hefner** uses a special glove for playing computer games... We hear that **Edn-Ware's Prisoner 2** is being used by government agencies to test applicants for their problem-solving skills... **Avalon Hill** is entering the wild world of educational software... Did you hear that they caught **Apple** founder **Steve Wozniak's** wife actually scalping **Olympic** tickets?! It must be tough to make ends meet when you're a multimillionaire... We have two questions: What are **Steve's Jobs**? Will **Bill Budge**?... **Col-eco's** giving out free **Cabbage Patch Dolls** to folks who buy the **ColecoVision** game system. Maybe it should be the other way around... **Epyx** pres **Mike Katz** is in the news again—his



Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak

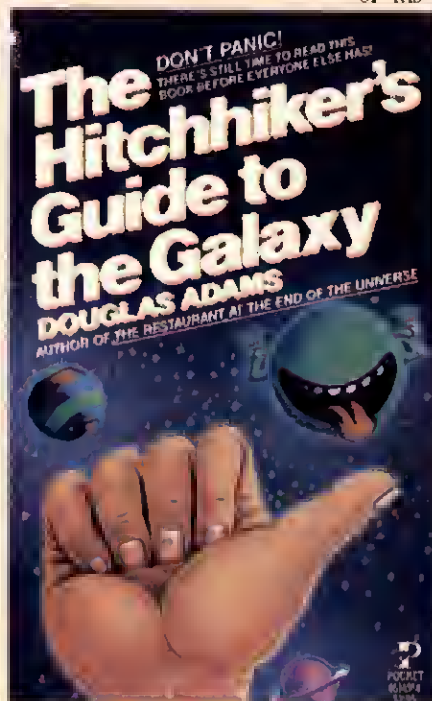


Don Gorlin

car was hit by a chunk of concrete dropped off a California overpass. When Mike pulled into a gas station, somebody tried to rob him. Katz calmly called the police and the guy was arrested... One of **Compu-Serve's** games—**Megawars**—is accessed by 2,300 people every day... **Odyssey** may be out of the computer games business but owner **North American Phillips** is still making money—they own the basic patent to the process of objects moving on a screen... A guy in **Thailand** named **Thitti Siamwalla** has developed the world's first **Arabic-language** computer. The entire **Koran** is

like all talk, no action. **Control Video Corporation's GameLine** system, by the way, has been shelved... Something else to wait for—**Paul McCartney's Give My Regards To Broadstreet** from **HESware**... Boy, **Space Ace** sure died out fast. Maybe they should have given out free **Borf** bags... The **Japanese** are developing some zowie laser games using a \$400 **Pioneer MSX** computer and a disc player. Prediction—laser games will be bigger in the home than they ever will be in the arcades... **Interphase** pres **Steve Willey** tells us that he told **Coleco**

of his plans to put voice on cartridges for **Col-ecoVision** and was told it was impossible. **Interphase** did it with **Sewer Sam**... New **Adam User's** group: write to **Norman R. Castro**, 809 W. 33rd Ave., Bellevue, NE 68005... **Hammerin' Hank Aaron** showed up at **Comdex** this year... Do you know which two cities in the U.S. have the highest per capita number of game players? **Steubenville, Ohio** and **Utica, New York**. That's according to the **Radio Sub-carrier Report**... **Jeanine Dearduff** was going for ten million points on **Tapper** recently in an arcade



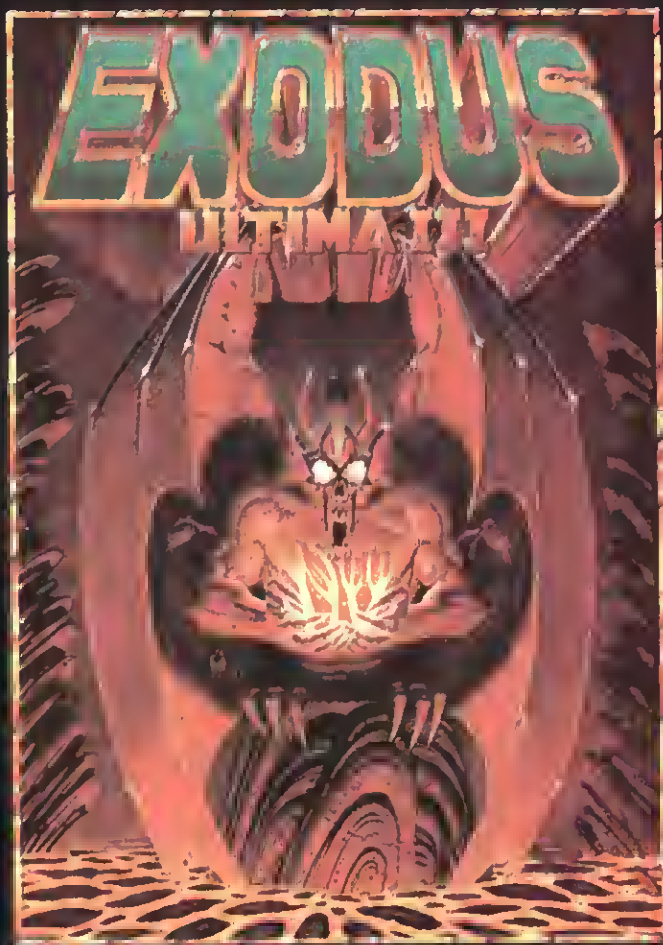
Next from Infocom?

now on five disks... Have you had a computer catastrophe lately? Send it to that new newsletter—**Expletive Computers**. Their address is P.O. Box 553, Mt. Freedom, N.J. 07970... Isn't it about time electronic delivery started delivering something? Sounds

in **Charlotte, North Carolina** when a clumsy TV cameraman accidentally unplugged the game. He was trying to plug in his television lights to record the event. **Jeanine** had been at it for 14 hours. We can relate to that... See you next time, maybe...



# "A LIVING TAPESTRY . . ."



"The world of Ultima III can only be compared to a living tapestry — complex and beautiful . . . This is the best fantasy game in computing. Indeed, it is one of the best fantasy worlds in which to live. Lord British is a veritable JRR Tolkien of the keyboard." — Popular Mechanics

"Exodus: Ultima III, with a superior plot to match its superior gaming system, is a great game. It upgrades the market; in several ways it sets new standards for fantasy gaming state of the art." — Softline

"Exodus: Ultima III is Lord British's magnum opus — so far. It's fun and exciting to play and constantly intriguing. And the ending is marvelously unexpected and not a bit disappointing — except that it is the ending, and as with a good book, you'll probably wish there were more." — Softalk

Available on: Apple, Atari, Com64, IBM



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**1985  
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## A.E.

The A.E. robots are out of control, darting around the screen and making a nuisance of themselves. You need to drive them away in three perfect attacks. Hitting your fire button launches a missile, releasing the button detonates it. So your timing is just as important as your aim. Sometimes the A.E. fly in single file, sometimes they break up into smaller units. Five screens.

Broderbund, for Atari, Apple

## ALPHA SHIELD

Six different enemies terrorize you, each with a distinct personality. The Alpherion Base has to be hit ten times before it blows up, and is protected by the moving, pulsating Alpha Shield. You can shoot through the shield or be daring and fly right inside. The graphics are simple and the sound is nothing special, but there are more than 30 waves of addicting eye-hand action.

Sirius, for Atari computers

## APPLE PANIC

The first ladder game was not *Donkey Kong*, but an oldie called *Space Panic*. This is a slightly revised version that puts you up against apple monsters who kill on contact. The goal is not to save some fair damsel, as in *Kong*. Here you are out for blood—apple blood—and the only way to kill them is by digging holes in the floor and waiting for one to get trapped. Then you smash him over the head with your pickaxe—unless he climbs free first. It's a well-programmed combination of action and strategy that's infinitely more challenging than *Kong*. The VIC version is actually better than the Apple game. In Coleco's version of the original *Space Panic*, your character is a spaceman instead of a miner.

Broderbund, Apple, and Atari  
Creative Software, for VIC-20

## AQUATRON

A horizontally scrolling *Defender* clone with a twist—you fight both in the air and underwater. There are six enemies to contend with, including *Time Pilot*-like parachutes that drop out of the sky and turn into missile-spewing subs. Graphics and sound are very simple. There are a few nice touches and the game is slightly addicting, but it can easily become monotonous.

Sierra, for Apple

## AZTEC

Superb animation and action make *Aztec* an outstanding piece of software. With keyboard controls, you guide an Indiana Jones-type character through an ancient Mexican pyramid in search of the gold idol. Pistols and dynamite turn up in some of the chests, while many are empty. The weapons are vital for fighting off giant spiders, dinosaurs and bands of Aztec warriors. Each time you enter the pyramid, which is viewed as a cross-section showing three floors and several rooms, a new maze is generated (unless you restore a saved game). No points are awarded



Boulder Dash

for killing the enemy, just for finding the idol and escaping. A real winner.

Datamost, for Apple and Commodore 64

## B.C.'S QUEST FOR TIRES

This one is based on the cartoon strip, and looks just like it. Bright, cartoony animation makes for one of the best-looking screens we've seen. Children will enjoy jumping over rocks, ducking under tree limbs, jumping on turtles and over lava pits. Adults may find the game to be a bit repetitive and dull.

Sierra, for Adam/ColecoVision, Apple, Atari computers

## BEACH-HEAD

As Chief Commander of land and sea forces in the Pacific, you've got to capture the fortress of the maniacal dictator Kuhn-Lin. It's five exciting games in one. Unlike a lot of shooting games, *Beach-Head* requires that you use your head, and in some cases, a calculator. The game features graphics that are so clean, you'll feel like you're watching a war movie.

Access Software, for C-64

## BERZERK

Stupid robots are after you. You can shoot them before they shoot you, or you can just make them walk into the walls, which fries them. After you clean out one maze, walk into the next. Keep an eye out for Evil Otto, the bouncing smile button. A very good rendition of the popular, but dated, arcade game. The 5200 version even has speech synthesis right in the cartridge.

Atari, for Atari computers, 5200

## THE BILESTOAD

If you love hacking off arms and legs and lopping off heads with hatchets, you'll love *The Bilestoad*. The game puts you in medieval armor and tosses you into a battle to the death with a similar computerized "meatling." The aerial view makes it look like two lobster tails

dancing. Arms and legs really fly off and blood splatters. Not for the squeamish.

Datamost, for Apple

## BLADE OF BLACKPOOLE

A "days of yore" graphic adventure. Your quest is to find the magic sword Myraglym and return it to its shrine. Colors are okay but the pictures are nothing to rave about. Lots of locations to visit, and plenty to do. The puzzles are often abstract and clues aren't as logically distributed as in an Infocom game. It's still a fun adventure, though *Blackpoole* will take average players some time to complete.

Sirius, for Apple, Atari and C-64

## BOULDER DASH

An incredibly addicting maze game along the lines of *Dig Dug*, but faster and more exciting. There are hundreds of boulders on the scrolling screen, and you can drop them on fireflies and butterflies, use them to suffocate amoebas and smash through Enchanted Walls. The object is to pick up the jewels that are scattered through 16 caves. But the boulders can fall on you and wipe you out. Terrific game with spectacular graphics and sound, a lot of depth and even playable intermissions.

First Star, for Atari computers, C-64, IBM

## BOULDERS AND BDMBS

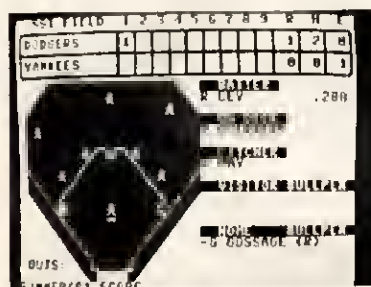
How did the astronaut get to the other side of the planet? He tunnels beneath the surface with a high-speed drill. But it's more than a horizontal *Dig Dug*: you've got a wacko-looking Alien Bird flying overhead dropping "Probe Birds," whose tungus-injecting probes shoot through the subsurface.

Scoring is based on how long you take to cross to the escape tunnel on the far side. There are 99 screens. Richly colored graphics and detailed animation enhance the action. Best thing about this one-of-a-kind game is that it accepts four joysticks, allowing your





Bruce Lee



Computer Baseball

friends to control the alien Probe Birds!

CBS, for Atari computers

### BOUNCING KAMUNGAS

**B**

An offbeat game, *Kamungas* involves growling watermelons, or a remote cousin, anyway. It's an action-oriented game. Move your farmer around to drop the seeds, then use a pitch fork to prevent the budding melons from being devoured by funny-looking creatures who bounce down from the sky. Lightning and snakes also get in the way. After harvesting the crop, you must drive it to market in a little truck. Good music for Mockingboard owners.

Penguin, for Apple

### BRISTLES

**A+**

Fastpaced arcade action as you race to paint a three-story house, then try to finish seven more in which the number of obstacles increases the higher you go. Elevators allow you to move up and down, and the character is extremely maneuverable and well-animated. The music is great, with different selections from the Nutcracker Suite accompanying specific characters, who range from Brenda the Brat to the Bucket Chucker.

After finishing each house, you'll see a couple of secret words. They add up to form a secret message, which can only be completed by finishing the whole game. There are six skill settings, each with a different message. Excellent game if you like action, patterns, and strategy.

First Star Software, for Atari, C-64 and 5200

### BRUCE LEE

**A**

A great action game in which you can play Bruce Lee or the bad guys (the Green Yamo, a sumo wrestler, and a ninja who uses deadly *bokken* sticks). The goal is to enter a wizard's castle and kill him. You must hop up to grab Japanese lanterns and score points while exploring the rooms. The two creeps attack

and kick or karate chop at you—but you can do the same. The flying drop kicks are especially fun to execute and watch. Screens scroll horizontally once you find the doors, leading into more rooms. All sorts of dangers make it hard to climb the vines and reach even more rooms. A pair of two-player games are available. In one, you play Bruce Lee while the other player controls the Yamo—and the computer moves the ninja!

Datasoft, for Atari

### BUZZARD BAIT

**C**

Great animation, but there's just too much stuffed into this game to make it fun. And it doesn't make sense. Why do the penguins kill you during the game but just push you aside during the bonus round? Why does the ship jump halfway up the screen but not fly? It goes on and on. The best part of the game is watching the humans fall on their heads or get eaten by the baby birds.

Sirius, for Apple

### CAPTURE THE FLAG

**C**

A split-screen, first-person perspective shows the view seen by each of two players as one tries to reach the flag on the other side of the maze that the second player must defend. (He can kill the first player just by entering the same section of the maze.) A map at the bottom slowly charts your progress as you move through the maze. Despite the excellent 3-D graphics and eerie music, playability suffers because you must keep looking back and forth between the map at the bottom and the maze at the top. You can play against the computer, and it's on cartridge as well as disk.

Sirius, for Apple and Atari

### CASTLE HASSLE

**A**

Very rarely can adventure game freaks and shoot-'em-up freaks enjoy the same game. This is an adventure game—you have 60 rooms to explore, with 40 treasures to recover. It's an action game—you have a gun and each room puts you in a new predicament. In some of the rooms you have to transform yourself into a magnet, torch, shovel or other object to complete the mission. The graphics are clean, bright and simple.

Roklan, for Atari computers

### CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

**CLASSIC**

As a prisoner of war in WW II, you must find the Nazi's secret battle plans and escape the castle. Dozens of guards and stormtroopers patrol the halls of the vast maze. Some will chase you, while others stay in the same room. Yellow chests may contain schnapps, bulletproof vests, hand grenades or more bullets for your pistol. All action is well-animated as your character dashes from room to room, picking or shooting locks off doors and chests. You can control the action with paddles, keyboard or a combination of keyboard and joystick. New mazes can be generated, games saved in progress and more. Plus built-in voice synthesis is used to make the guards

yell "Kapput!" and several other German phrases. A classic.

Muse, for Apple, Atari and Commodore 64

### CENTPEDE

**CLASSIC**

The classic arcade game in all its glory. Or most of it, anyway. This is one of the fastest shooting games that exists. Your shooter is at the bottom of the screen, and you've got to wipe out mushrooms, centipede segments, bouncing spiders and scorpions. Very addicting.

Atari, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20, IBM PC, TI99/4A

### CHOPLIFTER

**CLASSIC**

The classic rescue game. Sixty-four hostages are held behind enemy lines. You've got to pilot your helicopter and pick them up while avoiding tanks, fighter planes and killer satellites. You can shoot all you want, but the only thing that earns points is bringing the hostages to safety. *Choplifter* features superb animation—the little men wave at you and salute. Your helicopter banks and sways like a real helicopter. This is a must for your game library.

Broderbund, for Apple, Atari. Creative Software, for VIC-20

### COMPUTER BASEBALL

**B**

Instead of focusing on the action, this one puts you in charge as team manager. Pick a team from the 26 real ones on disk; then juggle the batting order, playing position and other variables. At bat, you can decide whether to hit, hit and run or bunt. Base runners can be told to lead or hold; pinch hitters and runners are available. You can also create teams using real statistics or invented ones. Limited animation and sound. For the thinking baseball nut.

Strategic Simulations, for Atari and C-64

### COMPUTER FOOTBALL STRATEGY

**B**

If you'd rather coach than play quarterback, this authentically designed game is just the ticket for a satisfying season. Animation is limited, with only two players shown for each team, but the number of available plays more than makes up for this.

Offensive plays include the end run, draw, reverse, screen, long bomb and 20 others. The defense can select from ten plays. No joysticks are needed. Just tap a key to indicate your play, then your opponent does the same. The onscreen pigskinners go through the motions, then the results are displayed. The Atari version isn't as strong visually as the others. Overall this is a good simulation if you're into the finer strategic points of football. It's even endorsed by *Sports Illustrated*.

Avalon Hill, for C-64, Atari, TRS I & III with 64K

### COMPUTER WAR

**C**

Inspired by the movie *Wargames*. The game is in three parts—monitoring the missiles, shooting the missiles, and matching the computer code to shut down the bases. The first and third sections are okay, but shooting the

missiles is laughably bad. There is a lot packed into the game, but no part stands up as a good game by itself.

Thorn EMI, for Atari computers, VIC-20, TI99/4A

## CONGO BONGO

D

A truly awful version of the popular arcade game. You are a hunter on a three-screen safari. Climb up Jungle Mountain. Trek across Jungle River. Set Congo Bongo on fire. The graphics are some of the worst we've ever seen. Some games simply can't make the arcade to home computer translation.

Sega, for Atari computers, C-64, Adam/ColecoVision, 5200

## THE COVETED MIRROR

B

Locked in the tower of evil King Voar's castle, you'll have to escape and locate the missing piece of a magic mirror that's the source of his power. You'll explore a strange medieval town whose inhabitants speak in rhymes, and have to solve not-too-taxing puzzles to win their cooperation. The most unusual element of this game involves two arcade-type games that are part of the adventure. In one, you're a knight in a jousting tournament, and use the keys to control your lance. The action games are overly simple, but a step in the right direction—combining the best features of shoot-'em-ups and adventure games.

Penguin, for Apple

## CRISIS MOUNTAIN

C

This is a ladder game set inside a volcano. You've got to joystick your character around, avoiding boulders, lava and other dangers, to collect his mining tools. Then it's on to digging up the bombs stashed by a gang of radicals. If you don't make it out in time, the volcano explodes. Your character can crawl around, hop and jump, but is slowed down when hit by anything.

Micro Fun, for Atari and C-64

## CRITICAL MASS

B

The race is on as you try to track down Count Stuportino before he launches nuclear missiles at the major cities of the world. It's a graphic adventure with lots of entertaining spot animation. You get to travel from Paris to Rome, London, New York and the Caribbean in the search for the mad bomber's trail. Clues are everywhere—but so is the sinister figure who keeps throwing bombs and trying to bump you off in assorted other ways. Good fun, with an animated action scene like *Escape from Rungistan's* skiing sequence—but this one involves water-skiing.

Sirius Software, for Apple and C-64

## CURSE OF RA

A

You'll need the original *Temple of Aposhai* to play this one, which is a fresh scenario set in Egypt. You can use a character already created with the first game, or generate a new one. The rooms are shown in a refreshingly different perspective, and there are dozens of new monsters and mummies to fight as you



The Dark Crystal

"Sue Ellen has hired you to find the map to an oil field Jock Ewing discovered before he died."

explore the Sphinx and three pyramids. First you stroll "around" a pyramid to find the entrance. Instead of seeing all the walls in your vicinity, though, you can usually only see the nearest one—which invites an eerier sense of creeping along in a dark tomb of the Egyptian gods. The fact that this scenario takes place in authentic settings definitely contributes to the effective adventuring atmosphere of the game.

Epyx, for Apple, Atari, Commodore 64, IBM

## CYBORG

A+

Michael (*Suspended*) Berlyn's second adventure, this all-text game puts you in the body of a half-man/half-machine called a cyborg. You awake in a weird forest, inhabited only by a lizard wearing a space suit. First thing to do is get power and food, the former for your mechanical/electronic half, the latter for your human side. Then there's a genuine mystery to unravel. *Cyborg* zaps you with one of the most electrifying scenes in the history of adventure games, so watch out when tramping through the brush. It also features a full-sentence parser and Berlyn's superlative prose.

Sentient Software, for Apple and C-64

## THE DARK CRYSTAL

A-

Even if you didn't see the film, you'll enjoy this graphic adventure game version. As Jen, you're destined to wander through forests, over hills and across streams to find and restore a piece of the Crystal before the world is doomed. Sharply defined, colorful, cartoony graphics illustrate the journey.

In addition, four lines of text at the bottom of each screen give details, sometimes going on as long as eight lines. *Crystal* has a two-word parser, so you can only use commands like, "Go north." To explore the dozens of different scenes in this game, you're often prompted to insert another of the three disks.

Sierra, for Apple, Atari computers

## DALLAS QUEST

A

Sue Ellen has hired you to find the map to an oil field Jock Ewing discovered in South America before he died. Of course, J.R. is also after the oil and will kill you to get his hands on the map. The graphics are some of the best to date in any adventure game. You can request clues during the game, so novices will enjoy it as much as intermediate-level players. Sound effects and remarkable 3-D animation enhances the scenario as you fly to South America and trek through the jungles in search of Chugalug's Trading Post and the missing map.

Dassoft, for Commodore 64

## DEADLINE

CLASSIC

Millionaire Marshall Robner has died—a few days after informing his lawyer that he intended to change his will. Was it murder? As Chief of Detectives, you have twelve hours to find out. This is an extraordinary all-text game. It's challenging, witty and logical. You might solve the case, but you might also get killed by a suspect who thinks you're on to him. The game comes with police reports, photos and even a packet of pills found beside the body. Remember, all words—no graphics.

Infocom, for all home computers

## DEATH IN THE CARIBBEAN

A

Despite a title that sounds like an Agatha



Christie novel, this game doesn't involve solving a murder along the lines of *Deadline*. As you explore the treacherous cliffs and "voodoo caves" on a tropical island, though, death certainly lurks behind every bush—with you as its victim. When you *do* get knocked off, the game's last scene even depicts your grave.

It's a beautifully tinted graphic adventure that offers plenty of puzzles and challenges for those who go for this kind of scenario. A full-color map is provided as a guide, but doesn't give away the plot.

*Microfun, for Apple, C-64*

## **DEFENDER CLASSIC**

One of the best macho, shoot-the-works, blast-everything-out-of-the-sky games in the world. The joint is swarming with enemies of all kinds, and you've got to rescue your humanoids and blow those creeps out of the sky. An excellent translation of the classic arcade game.

*Atari, for Atari computers, Apple, C-64, VIC-20, IBM PC, TI99/4A*

## **DEMON ATTACK CLASSIC**

A classic shooting game in the tradition of *Space Invaders*. But this time the aliens swoop in from the sides of the screen and chase after you. There are over 80 waves in the game, and each one is slightly different—so you're always trying to get better and see what the next wave looks like. Multicolored aliens, terrific animation and explosions. Warning: Prepare to become addicted.

*Imagic, for Atari computers, PCjr, VCS*

## **DIG DUG B**

If you liked the arcade game *Dig Dug*, you'll enjoy the home game just as much. It's nearly a perfect duplication of the original. If you didn't like the arcade game, you won't like this either. It's a slow-moving, cute game in which you dig your own mazes underground. It is original, but some players find the whole concept a little vague.

*Atari, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20, IBM PC, TI99/4A*

## **DIMENSION X A**

Piloting a warrior ship in this first-person shoot-'em-up, your mission is to protect the capital from Rigillian lighters. A desert map in the upper right-hand corner shows the planet's 25 sectors, each color-coded to indicate whether it's occupied by Rigillians, your fuel base or capital, or is unexplored. To travel to a bordering sector and hunt down more of the enemy, zip into one of the tunnels that line your current location. The tunnels are like the trench scene in *Star Wars*, with horizontal "electrified Delta bars" that you have to fly over or under. Sound effects, animation and play value are top-notch, and the view of the desert's surface is 3-D.

*Synapse, for Atari and C-64*

## **DINO EGGS C**

You've been dumped into the Mesozoic Era,

where the dinosaurs, proto-snakes, proto-pedes and proto-spiders are giving you a hard time. As in Microfun's *Miner 2049er* and *Heist*, this is a climbing and jumping game. Even though the theme of *Dino Eggs* is exciting, the actual game moves very slowly and becomes boring. Get the other two games instead.

*Microfun, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64, IBM PC*

## **DONKEY KONG CLASSIC**

The classic arcade game has been faithfully reproduced, for those who still want to play it. As Mario the carpenter, you have to put up with a lot of harassment to rescue your girl from the ape at the top of the screen. You know the story. Four screens—Girders, Rivets, Elevators and Conveyor Belts—are in most versions of the game. The graphics and sound are pretty good. In the Atari version, it's easiest to get up those ladders.

*Atari, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20, IBM PC, TI99/4A. Coleco, for Adam/ColecoVision*

## **DONKEY KONG JR. B**

This time Kong's offspring attempts to free his dad from Mario, the good guy in *Donkey Kong*. You've got three screens—the vine screen, the chain screen and the jump-board screen. As Junior climbs these structures, he's got to avoid the Snapjaws, Nitpickers and Stooky birds dispatched by Mario. The final screen from the arcade game—Mario's Lair—has been dropped. Still, it's a good-looking, challenging game.

*Coleco, for Adam/ColecoVision*

## **DRAGONHAWK B-**

Like in *Joust*, you've got to hit the fire button continuously to keep your dragon's wings flapping. He won't die when he hits the ground, but is easier prey for the buzzards, iguanas and other creatures that must be hit from above if you want to kill them first. Fast action, good graphics, six levels and three difficulty settings.

*Creative Software, for Commodore 64*

## **DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN B**

Sort of a role-playing game, but no hit points or gold to keep track of. Choose your actions from menus listing the key characters on Pern you can negotiate with, your attitude (conciliatory, forceful, etc.) and other items. The goal is to convince the Lords of Pern to form alliances with you to kill off the alien "Thread" that falls from the skies intermittently. You get two points for each new ally and need 20 to win. A hi-res animated action scene breaks in at the end of each turn; you fly your dragon around and hit the fire button to make him breathe fire on the Thread. No killing is allowed, however. A game in progress can be saved to disk.

*Epyx, for Atari and Commodore 64*

## **DROD A+**

*Drod* had me drooling—it's one of those "just one more round" kind of games that is note-

worthy for its remarkable graphics and animation. Into the depths of an ancient stone structure it sends you, to save a family (and their pets) from an evil witch doctor. Dozens of brightly colored beasts assault you on the way, with everything from venom-spitting sea horses to flying toothbrushes. Two characters must be saved in each screen to advance to the next one; after freeing Mom in the third one, you'll see a TV-quality animated intermission.

*Broderbund, for Apple, Atari, and C-64*

## **ENCHANTER A+**

This is a strange tale of a novice Wizard, played by you, who must enter the castle of the evil warlock Krill and learn his secret in order to defeat him. You start off with a spell book and some basic spells, finding others along the way. There's one that opens doors and another for undoing damage you may have done by misusing some other spell. There's even one for turning anything—even yourself—into a newt! In *Enchanter*, you actually encounter a wandering adventurer who's apparently lost his way while exploring a cave in the underground caverns of Zork.

*Infocom, for all home computers*

## **EPIDEMIC D**

A series of disease-bearing asteroids hits Earth, triggering deadly epidemics. By viewing a color-coded world map, you decide which of two types of remedies to apply to infected countries, then check a "regional update" screen for the effects, current number of casualties and other data. Next a radar map shows more asteroids, so you can pick one to target during the missile-launching phase. The strategy involves formulating a coordinated plan for containing the infections in their country of origin.

*SSI, for Apple*

## **ESCAPE FROM RUNGISTAN C**

Wake up in a jail cell in the mid-African nation of Rungistan, then break out and make your way across the desert, through the mountains and hopefully to safety. No color, just simple line drawings. But some interesting animated sequences almost make up for this weak point. In one you must ski down a mountain and swerve between trees. Two-word parser, limited vocabulary.

*Sirius Software, for Apple*

## **E.T. PHONE HOME B**

No, not the awful VCS *E.T.* In this one, the screen scrolls in four directions as *E.T.* searches for the phone pieces he needs to call home. The suburban neighborhood is intricately portrayed, and the sound of *E.T.* speaking comes across well (no voice attachment needed). The saucer beams *E.T.* aboard in one of the most entertaining climaxes around.

*Atari, for Atari computers*

## **EXPEDITION AMAZON A+**

Instead of fighting orcs and dragons, this role-playing game sends you to South

America to fight alligators, jaguars, mosquitoes and Jivaro Indians. Four-member parties can buy equipment and head into the jungle. The screen is blank when you get there. When a key is pressed to move the group, the plot of land they've entered is displayed. Each section of jungle must be mapped in this manner, and Inca artifacts dug up. These are sold back in town. Lots of humor and excitement is packed into this scenario. Also, the progress and status of teams can be stored on the disk. This allows players to compete, though both can't play simultaneously.

*Penguin, for Apple*

## FLIGHT SIMULATOR II CLASSIC

Converted from the IBM classic, this simulation puts you in the cockpit of a single-engine Cessna with a full range of authentic dials, gauges and controls. You can choose from 80 airports in four metropolitan areas and fly from one town to the next. The graphics look like a semi-3-D display, and sound effects are excellent (except for the Apple version). A WW I bombing game is also on-board.

*Sublogic, for Apple, Atari and C-64*

## FLIP & FLOP A-

Have you ever played *Q\*Bert* standing on your head? *F&F* takes the *Q\*Bert* hop-around-and-change-things theme and turns it upside down every other wave. It's a weird and fun way to play. The game also features a zookeeper, flypaper squares, kangaroos, monkeys, 30 levels and bouncy circus music and intermissions. Great graphics, too.

*First Star, for Atari computers, C-64*

## FOURTH ENCOUNTER D

What's wrong with this game? Let us count the ways. It's a ripoff. The first three "encounters" are your standard *Galaxian*-type aliens buzzing around you. The fourth is original, but is so hard you'll feel frustrated instead of challenged. Aliens gang up on you and ram you from below and there's nothing you can do about it. The points are too low. Stay away.

*Thorn EMI, for VIC-20*

## FRAZZLE C

"Killer beasts" from space have invaded your TV screen, and you don't even have a joystick to fight back with! Instead, you control your ship from the keyboard, steering as you would in *Asteroids*. Your arsenal's limited to 16 Energy Probes that float in space like mines. Blast all the beasts and six more appear. On the second and third levels, they move in different patterns. Sound is decent for an Apple game. Color and animation, though acceptable, are weak. *Frazzle* is far from state of the art, and it's a real drag using the keyboard instead of a joystick.

*Muse, for Apple*

## FORTRESS OF THE WITCH KING C

In this simple role-playing game, you're out to find the fortress and kill the Witch King.

"A faithful version of the old arcade hit, but who wants to shoot down rows of marching aliens in 1985?"

Keyboard control allows you to move your party, represented by a white square, around the main map. (It only shows parts of the land that you've already explored.) A magic, hi-res map of the immediate vicinity pinpoints towns, castles and other features. More warriors, wizards, food and the like can be bought in the towns. All actions are menu-driven, except for moving. When you encounter trolls, ogres or other beasts, an all-text display tells how the battle's going. Twenty difficulty levels and an infinite variety of randomly generated maps assure that youngsters won't get bored with this game overnight.

*Avalon Hill, for Apple*

## FROGGER CLASSIC

Either you love it or you hate it. Maneuver your frog up the screen without getting hit by cars, eaten by snakes, smashing into walls or drowning. Bouncy music and colorful, cartoony graphics make this the ultimate cute game of all time. The only question is, with so many interesting new games coming out, do you still care about getting this old frog to the other side of the road?

*Parker, for Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20, Adam/ColecoVision, TI994/A. Apple and IBM disk versions by Sierra.*

## FROGGER II A

This makes the original look like kid stuff. Screen I takes Froggie underwater. Screen II brings him to the surface and a ride on a mother duck. Screen III gets him airborne, where he can eat butterflies and float on clouds.

*Parker, for Atari computers*

## GALAXIAN C

A faithful adaptation of the arcade hit, but who wants to play *Galaxian* in 1985? The game is a cross between *Space Invaders* and *Demon Attack*. Shoot down rows of marching aliens that leave their ranks and sail down to attack you. Ho-hum.

*Atari, for Atari computers, Apple, C-64, VIC-20, IBM PC*

## GATEWAY TO APSHAI A

This latest sequel to *Temple of Apshai* introduces sophisticated enhancements that deliver smoother, more enjoyable gameplay. For one, it's on a cartridge; you won't have to wait for the lengthy program to load. For another, a joystick is used to guide your adventurer through the 128 dungeons that comprise the maze. There are eight levels, with 16 dungeons on each one, and 60 rooms to a dungeon (that's 7,500 rooms!). Each dungeon has a different floor plan, and treasure is strewn from one end to the other.

*Epyx, for Atari and C-64*

## GRUDS IN SPACE B

Gruds are funny-looking aliens who can make or break your efforts to complete this graphic adventure. It starts on the bridge of your ship in deep space, where you pick up a distress signal and rush to rescue a ship that's in trouble on Pluto. There are caves, roads and houses to visit, and plenty of strange beings to deal with in your travels. Every scene is sketched in a cartoon-like style that often uses a bit of animation.

*Sirius, for Atari and Apple*

## GYRUSS A-

A very good adaptation of the *Galaga*-in-the-rodent arcade game. They couldn't match the graphics of the original, so they have the enemies fire at you more often. It works. Satellites, meteors and enemy planes swirl around you frantically. Double fire-power and chance rounds are included here. *Gyruss* doesn't have a lot of depth, but it will appeal to those who never tire of shooting things.

*Parker, for Atari computers, C-64, Adam/ColecoVision*

## THE HEIST A-

You are Graham Crackers, a spy who must steal all the art in a museum and find a hidden micro dot. There are holes in the floor, man-eating robots, killer furniture and death traps of every shape and size. There are 143 rooms to explore, and you'll discover something new each time you play. Nothing moves very fast — this is a strategy game. The graphics are outstanding.

*MicroFun, for Apple, Atari computers, IBM, Adam/ColecoVision, C-64*

## INFIDEL A

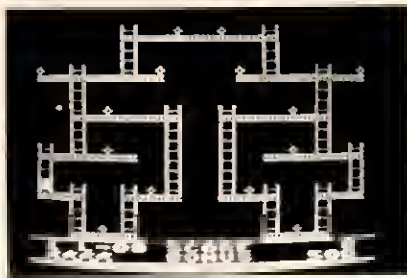
This is the first in the "Tales of Adventure" series being written by Michael Berlyn. You act out the role of a professional explorer bent on looting a lost pyramid of its vast treasures. The pyramid is wall-to-wall with death traps designed by the temple priests to stop graverobbers like you from reaching the Queen's final resting place and her solid gold sarcophagus. As you might expect, it's a tough game.

*Infocom, for all home computers*

## THE INSTITUTE A

Locked away in a nuthouse, you discover the only means of escape lies "in your





Jumpman



International Soccer



Juice

dreams." At least that's the advice the other patients offer. The psychiatrist says you're wacko and have to stay there to protect yourself and society. There's a way out, but not through the kind of doors in most adventures. The graphics are extremely well-executed, created with Penguin Software's *Complete Graphics System*. Two-word parser. Seven games can be saved on game disk. A good change of pace from the usual caves and rocket ships.

Screenplay, for Atari and Commodore 64

### INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

**B**

One of the best sports games we have, but that's not saying much. You can only control one of your players at a time, and when you kick the ball it always travels the same distance. Players can run through other players as if they were ghosts, and you can't control where your goalie dives—just *when*. Still the game is fun, especially against a human opponent. Very good graphics and animation.

Commodore, for C-64

### JAWBREAKER

**B**

Your character is a set of teeth that moves around gobbling dots and avoiding faces in a maze. In the four corners of the maze are power dots. Consume one and you can pursue the faces instead of the other way around. From time to time, candy appears at the center of the maze. It's worth a lot of extra points. This sounds a lot like *Pac-Man*, but the game play is really quite different because of the construction of the maze. It looks like a five-story house with continuously moving doors.

Sierra, for the Apple, Atari and C-64.

### JOUST

**B+**

Atari has done a terrific job in translating *Joust* for the home. You sit atop a winged creature and attempt to bop enemies from above to score points. If they hit you from above, you lose a "man." You also get points for picking up eggs laid by the enemy. This is truly a unique game in play action and control. You don't shoot, you bump. You don't fire, you flap your wings. An excellent and very difficult game that some people may find even too challenging.

Atari, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20, T199/4A

### JUMPMAN

**A**

Five games in one, this frenetic game won our "Golden Floppy Award" as Best Ladder

"Locked in a nuthouse, the only means of escape is your dreams. The psychiatrist says you're a wacko."

Game of 1983. The 30 levels are divided into three sequences, and you can start at Beginner, Intermediate or Advanced. The Grand Loop runs you through all 30 screens in succession, and Randomizer presents them in an unpredictable order. Some feature dragons and cowboys to kill in addition to the bombs you must touch to advance to the next level. Up to four can compete. Hi-score table is saved to disk.

Epyx, for Atari and Commodore 64

### JUMPMAN JR.

**A**

As in *Jumpman*, you've got to race around touching bombs to defuse them (and score points), ducking an occasional flying bullet. The animation's superb as you run up and down ladders, leap across wide chasms and frenetically climb down ropes. The twelve screens include levels like "Electrocution" and "Dumbwaiter," incorporating unique special effects and challenges in each. Up to four players can alternate on the same joystick, and the speed can be set from 1-B. The music's unusually good, with interesting harmonies and even some blues tossed in.

Epyx, for C-64 and Atari computers

### JUNGLE HUNT

**D**

A truly awful game, one that gives new meaning to the word "bad." Swing on the vines through the Deadly Forest, swim past crocodiles in Reptile River, leap over Boulders in

Boulder Field and finally reach the Cannibal Camp. Terrible graphics, boring play action—even on the Apple version. They should take this one and bury it.

Atari, for Apple, Atari computers, Commodore 64, VIC-20, IBM, T199/4A

### JUICE

**B+**

*Q\*Bert* fans will love this maze game. As Edison the kinetic android, you've got to jump on every square of a circuit board in order to let the electricity flow. Weird creatures like Killerwatt and Nohm are chasing you, but you can hop onto teleportation squares on either side of the screen to beam you over to the other side. You can start on any of the six levels, and the sixth is truly infuriating. Great graphics.

Tronix, for Atari computers

### KABOOM!

**B+**

A maniac known as the Mad Bomber is dropping bombs, and you've got to catch them before they hit the ground. This is one of the fastest and most intense games around. Colorful, cartoon-like graphics make this psychotic scenario almost cute. In the two-player version, one player can catch the bombs and the other one can drop them. Good music, too.

Activision, for Atari computers

### KEN USTON'S PROFESSIONAL BLACKJACK

**A**

Want to learn some winning blackjack strategies instead of just killing time at a computerized card game? Take a few lessons from Ken Uston, now barred from playing 21 at casinos around the world because of his successful card-counting technique. His and several other systems are programmed into the game, in which up to seven people can play against the dealer. Select one from the menu, and the program tells you when you've made an incorrect play or bet (accomplished from the keyboard). The systems included range from Basic Strategy to Uston's Advanced Point Count, or you can enter your own.

Intelligent Statements, for Apple, C-64, IBM PC

### KING'S QUEST

**A+**

The first adventure with full-fledged animation. You steer Sir Grahame around the kingdom via joystick or keyboard controls. The goal is to collect three items for the king and ensure your chance of inheriting the throne. The attention to detail and color

makes it the best-looking Sierra adventure to date. There's a 3-D feel to the game, because Sir Grahame can walk in front of or behind the trees and other parts of the scenery. Also, there are different solutions to the puzzles. You get various numbers of points depending on how you solve a problem. A landmark game.

*Sierra, for Apple and IBM PC with 128 K IBM, for PCjr*

### **KNIGHT OF DIAMONDS** **A**

A sequel to *Wizardry*, this one can only be played with characters created in the original game. In fact, they must be at least 13th-level characters in order to survive the treacherous traps and foul creatures lurking within the six levels of the dungeon. Each level holds an individual quest that must be fulfilled along the way.

*Sir-Tech Software, for Apple and IBM PC, jr*

### **KNIGHTS OF THE DESERT** **A**

A one- or two-player war game based on the WWII conflict in North Africa. In the solitaire game, you control the Nazis. Historically accurate and offering a variety of scenarios, *Knights* also utilizes a flexible player-interface that makes it easy to maneuver all those little units around the map. It's realistic in the sense that you must establish and maintain supply lines across the Sahara as well as blast the enemy to oblivion.

*Strategic Simulations, for Apple, Atari and C-64*

### **K-RAZY SHOOTOUT** **C**

A cheap ripoff of *Berzerk*. The droids are blocklike and look like garbage cans with legs. They look silly and only attack in threes. Pretty good sound effects, but not much in the way of graphics or play action. Go with the original shooting robot game.

*CBS, for Atari computers*

### **LAZER ZONE** **B-**

*Lazer Zone* differs from other shoot-outs in that you defend two planes the same time—the bottom of the screen and the right side. Skullships and Bugships drift in from the left and you've got to blow them out of the sky with your two independently moving cannons. The graphics are very simple, but the sound is powerful. Thirty-one skill levels.

*HES, for VIC-20*

### **LEGACY OF LLYGAMYN** **A+**

The third scenario in the *Wizardry* series, *Legacy* features improved graphics in the dungeon scenes. They're larger and more detailed. Also, Macintosh-type windows provide information during the game. The plot involves the town of Llygamyn, which you must save by defeating the dragon L'kbreth and retrieving a mystical orb. There's no built-in character generator, so you have to have the original *Wizardry* in order to play this one.

*Sir-Tech Software, for Apple, IBM PC and jr*

### **LUNAR LEEPER** **B**

The goofy Leepers jump around trying to

---

“You start  
out standing over the  
body of a hood you just  
knocked out with your  
pistol. A real winner.”

---

snare your spaceship out of the sky while you're trying to pick up your men and carry them to safety. This delightful space game is challenging and has a sense of humor. After you rescue your men, you have to travel through tunnels and shoot a huge eyeball.

*Sierra, for C-64, VIC-20*

### **MAJOR LEAGUE HOCKEY** **A**

*Hockey* packs real game-playing punch. A joystick-controlled menu lets you select solitaire or multi-player versions, in which up to four can play. Then you choose which joysticks control which of the two teams. Once the puck hits the ice, you hit the fire button and the onscreen team member you're currently controlling flashes with the number of your joystick. After figuring out who's got the puck, you maneuver to rocket it toward your goal. Time periods can be changed; the three skill levels vary in speed.

*Thorn EMI, for Atari computers*

### **MASK OF THE SUN** **A-**

This graphic adventure takes you to Mexico, where a fabled gold mask lies hidden in one of three Aztec pyramids. It's one of the toughest adventures around because it's downright unfair in several scenes. But it's full of good-looking art and incorporates a fair amount of animation that was revolutionary when the game was released. The parser accepts complete sentences and has a fairly extensive vocabulary. Unless you've got a clue book or feel like investing six months in a Mexican jungle, *Mask* is not recommended for any but the most experienced adventurers.

*Ultrasoft, for Apple, Broderbund, Commodore 64*

### **MASQUERADE** **A+**

A “disk drive detective” game, *Masquerade* is as tough as Infocom's *Deadline*. You start out standing over the body of a hood you've just knocked out with your pistol. Searching him turns up a few clues, but you've got to be careful or the dynamite in the phone booth will

end the game very quickly. Lots of beautifully executed illustrations, spot animation and sound effects—plus a solid story—make *Masquerade* a real winner.

*Zoom Software, for Apple and C-64*

### **MASTERTYPE** **CLASSIC**

The bestselling educational game of all time. There is a word in each corner of the screen. Unless you type them out correctly, spaceships streak toward you and blow up your ship in the center of the screen. You can practice vowels, numbers, punctuation and even invent your own word lists. The game also tells you your typing speed instantly. It's fun and educational.

*Scarborough, for Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM*

### **MICROBE** **B**

You're the captain of a miniaturized sub that performs operations on critically ill patients. After the sub is injected into the patient's bloodstream, you have a few minutes to get to the brain, destroy a blood clot and perform delicate microsurgery. The game is a combination of complex problem solving and arcade action. And you might just learn something about anatomy.

*Synergistic Software, for Apple*

### **MINER 2049ER** **CLASSIC**

Most people consider this classic ladder game to be even better than *Donkey Kong*. You are Bounty Bob, and you've got to fill in the floor of a mine. The game's biggest asset is the number of challenges. There are eleven mines (Adam version) and each one provides you with a new and challenging adventure. The graphics are blocky, but that hasn't bothered the millions who have enjoyed *Miner*.

*MicroFun, for Adam/ColecoVision, Apple, Atari computers, C-64, IBM PC, TRS-80, VIC-20*

### **MINIT MAN** **A**

The premise: rebuild a bridge so your three Minit Man missiles can cross over and be loaded into the silos for launching. You pilot a very maneuverable helicopter, pick up bridge parts on the far right of three horizontally scrolling screens, then fit them onto the bridge. Anti-aircraft fire blasts at you while trying to pick up or drop off parts, and robots buzz around, intent on blowing you to bits. You must also joystick the pilot out of the chopper and into a building to protect the main computer from destruction by the robots. The world explodes if you don't launch your missiles within the five-minute time limit. Brilliantly animated, excellent shoot-'em-up.

*Penguin, for Apple, C-64*

### **MONSTER SMASH** **A**

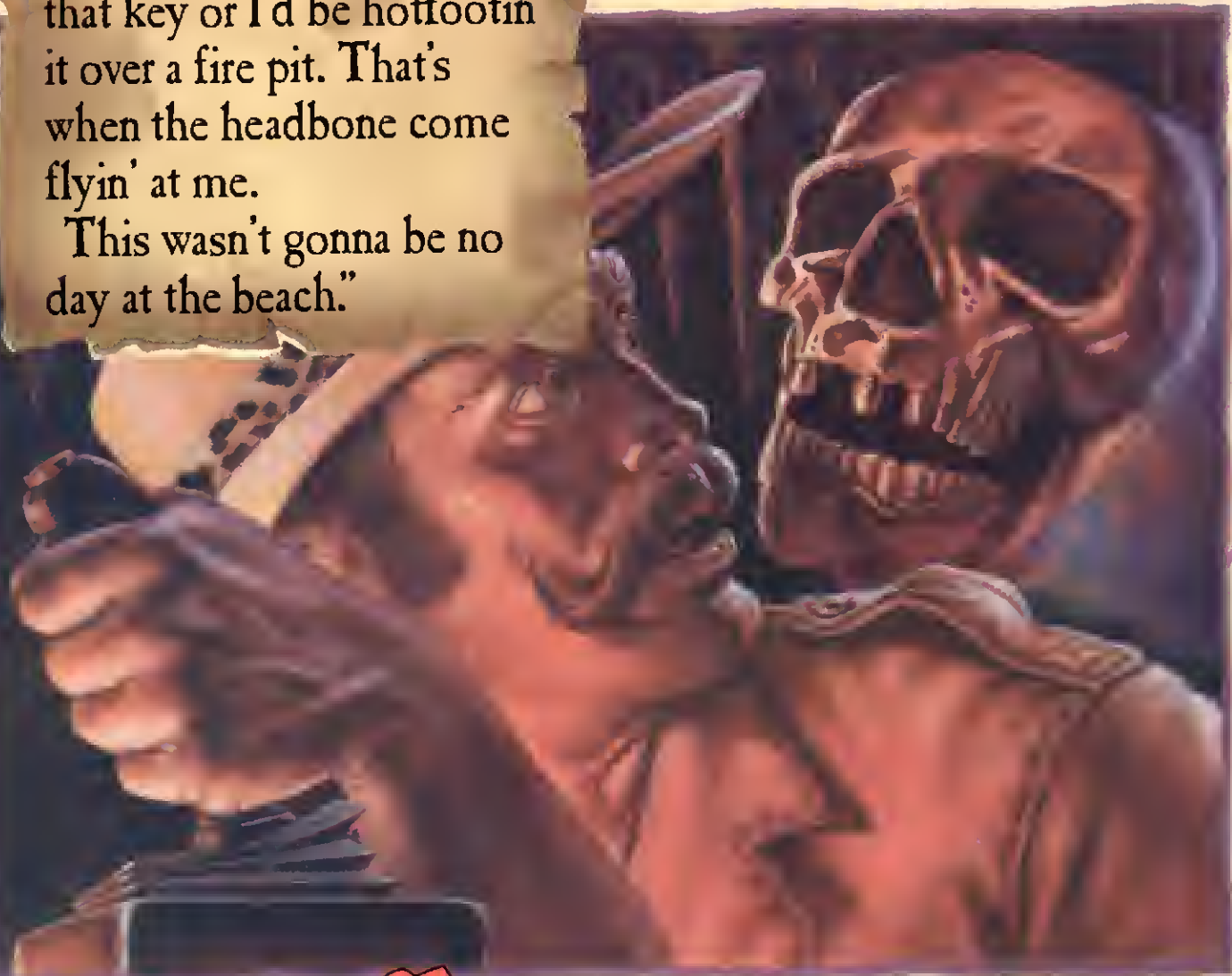
You are the master of a graveyard, and you've got to prevent the monsters from escaping by bopping them on the head with tombstones. Little kids also try to escape, and if you bop ten of them, the game is over. The 12 tombstones are arranged in a grid. *Monster*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 51



"I had to think quick—  
I remember where I seen  
that key or I'd be hotfootin'  
it over a fire pit. That's  
when the headbone come  
flyin' at me.

This wasn't gonna be no  
day at the beach."




# Montezuma's Revenge

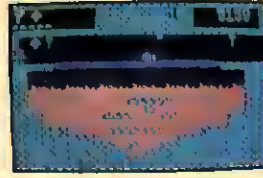
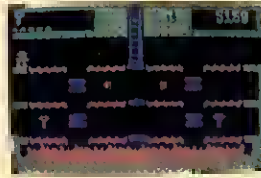
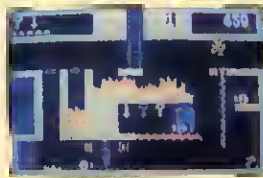
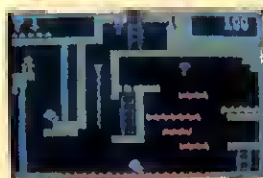
FEATURING PANAMA JOE

If you've got a mind like Einstein and reflexes to match, then Montezuma's Revenge™ is the game for you. It's a revolutionary game that challenges you to think *smart* and react *fast*. Join Panama Joe's™ search for buried treasure. Figure a way to get him over the fire pits. Behind the locked doors.

Through a hundred\* rooms crawlin' with critters. Get Montezuma's Revenge and get ready for action and adventure

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 **PARKER BROTHERS**



ColecoVision

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\*24 Rooms in Atari 2600. \*\*Parker Brothers is not affiliated with these companies.

# WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU?

## ACTIVISION

Beamrider, H.E.R.O., Pitfall, Zenji, Toy Bizzare (C-64). Decathlon (AT, C-64). Explorer, Wonderbolt, Camp Clean-up (C-64, COL, AT). The Activision Pencil (C-64).

## ATARI

Final Legacy (AT, 5200). Zookeeper (2600). This is Ground Control, Through the Starbridge, Peek-A-Boo, Letter Tutor, Word Tutor (AT). Yaacov Agam's Interactive Painting, Find It, The ABC of CPR, Wheeler-Dealer, Simulated Computer, Telly Turtle, (AP, AT, PC, C-64). Gremlins, Track and Field, Mario Brothers, Donkey Kong, JR. (AP, C-64, PC, jr, VIC). Crystal Castles (AP, C-64, PC, VIC). Centipede, Donky Kong, Moon Patrol, Pac-Man (jr).

## BAEN

Wings out of Shadow (AT, AP, PC). Berserker Raids (AP, AT, C-64, PC). The Electric Dragon, Snake, Starclash II.

## BRODERBUND

Stealth, Spelunker, Whistler's Brother (AT, C-64). Captain Goodnight and the Islands of Fear, Mercy Birds, Bank St. Filer, Bank St. Mailer, Dazzle Draw, Where in the World is Carmen San Diego? (AP). Loderunner (MAC).

## CBS

Math Mileage, Astro-Grover, Big Bird's Funhouse, Sesame Street Letter-Go-Round, The House that Jill Built, Key to Responsible Driving, Adventure Master, Pathwords, Forecast, T-Rex, The Honey Factory.

## COLECO

Tarzan, War Games, Cabbage Patch Adventures in the Park, Fortune Builder, Dr. Seuss Fix-up the Mix-up Builder (Adam, AP, AT, C-64).

## DATAMOST

Ankh, Mychess II (AP, AT, C-64). Earthly Delights (AP, PC, jr). Jet Boot Jack, Mabel's Mansion, Polar Pierre (AT, C-64).

## DATASOFT

Juno First, Mancopter Meridian III (AT, AP, C-64, PC, jr). Bruce Lee (AP, C-64, PC, jr). Dallas (AT, AP, PC, jr). Zaxxon (AP IIc). Lost Tomb (AP, PC, jr).

## EPYX

Hot Wheels, G.I. Joe, Barbie, Breakdance, Robots of Dawn.

## FIRST STAR

Romper Room's I Love My Alphabet (AT, AP, C-64). Spy vs. Spy (AP, C-64). U.S. Adventure (AT, AP, C-64, PC).

## INFOCOM

Cutthroats, Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (all home computers).

## KONAMI

Track & Field I, Track & Field 2.

## PARKER

Frogger II: Threedeepl, Mr. Do's Castle, Montezuma's Revenge, (AT, 2600, 5200, C-64, COL).

## PENGUIN

Xyphus (C-64, PC, MAC). Pensate, Coveted Mirror, The Quest (MAC).

## ORIGIN

Car Wars, Ogre

## QUICKSILVA

Hideous Bill and the Go-Giants, Space Ambush, Falcon Patrol, Escape, Timegate, Garbage Gobbler, Fred.

## SCHOLASTIC

Operation: Frog, Microzine #4, 5 and 6, Math Man, Quations.

## SYNAPSE

Enigma, Mindwheels

## TRILLIUM

Amazon, Rendezvous, with Rama, Shadowkeep, Dragonworld (AP, C-64).

## ZOOM

Lucifer's Realm, Elysian Fields (AP). Masquerade, Sherwood Forest (C-64).

VCS = Atari VCS, IN = Intellivision, 5200 = Atari 5200, AT = Atari Home computers, COL = ColecoVision, VIC = Commodore VIC-20, 64 = Commodore 64, AP = Apple II, TRS = Radio Shack TRS-80, TI = Texas Instruments TI 99/4A, VEC = Vectrex, PC = IBM PC, MAC = Macintosh.

# HIT GAMES & HIGH SCORES

## COMPUTER GAMES

1. *HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE* (Infocom)
2. *ARCHON II* (Electronic Arts)
3. *XYPHUS* (Penguin)
4. *MILLIONAIRE* (Blue Chip)
5. *CHAMPIONSHIP LODE RUNNER* (Broderbund)
6. *ROBOTS OF DAWN* (Epyx)
7. *ZORK I* (Infocom)
8. *ULTIMA III* (Origin)
9. *WORLD'S GREATEST*

## BASEBALL (Epyx)

10. *FLIGHT SIMULATOR II* (Sublogic)
11. *SARGON III* (Hayden)
12. *BEYOND CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN* (Muse)
13. *SORCERER* (Infocom)
14. *ZAXXON* (Datasoft)
15. *SUMMER GAMES* (Epyx)
16. *ARCHON* (Electronic Arts)
17. *SEASTALKER* (Infocom)
18. *WIZARDRY* (Sir-Tech)
19. *ZORK III* (Infocom)
20. *SKYFOX* (Electronic Arts)

*PUNCH OUT: 8,585,130*  
by Chris Emery

*SPY HUNTER: 346,890*  
by Phil Britt

*CROSSBOW: 19,885,500*  
by Donn Nauert

*HYPER SPORTS: 155,000*  
by Phil Britt

*TRACK & Field: 93,100*  
by Chris Ayra

Our thanks to Walter Day and the Twin Galaxies International Scoreboard for the high scores.



SOFTWARE VERSIONS

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## NEW PRODUCTS

### TV OR NOT TV

**A**fter a hard day of defending the planet from hordes of alien invaders, most gamers enjoy a little MTV, Buck Rogers movies or even David Letterman. Now you won't even have to go into the other room and turn on the tv, because it's a snap to turn your monitor into a tv set offering an amazingly sharp picture. The MT/1 Monitor Tuner is a 60-channel, cable-ready tuner with separate video and audio output, and it plugs right into your monitor. Audio can also be run to a stereo system. Cable/antenna input is provided, and wireless remote control means you'll never have to move again. From Cardeo, Inc.

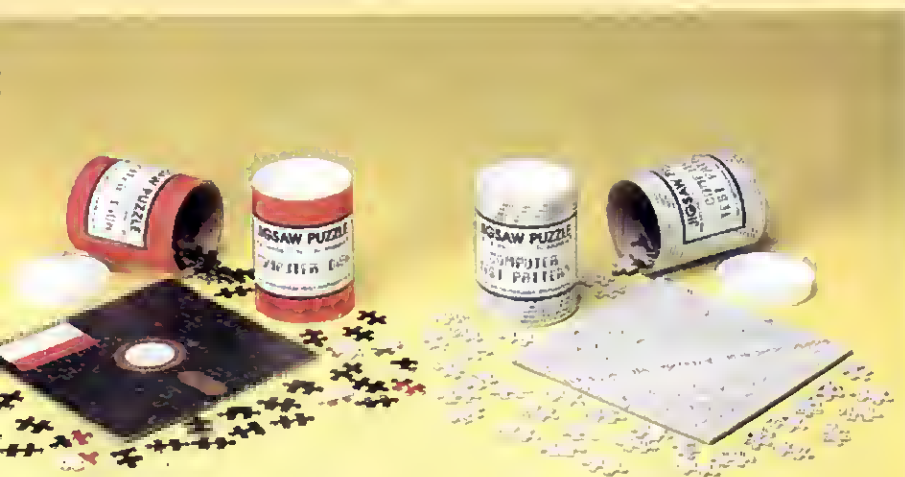


### PLAY IT AGAIN, RAM

**M**ost music software is awkward to use because you must tap on the computer's keys to play a tune. Melodian's software works with a genuine 37-unit keyboard that plays like an electric organ. Called the Melodian Songbird, it's a combination synthesizer/three-track recording studio that displays the notes on-screen while they're playing. With a three-octave range, the ability to create customized instruments, save songs to disk and many features unique to this environment, the Songbird is an entertaining and educational addition to any Commodore 64 owner's system. The Songbird goes for \$200. Software like the ConcertMaster, MelodyMaster and RhythmMaster costs \$34.95. From Melodian, Inc.







## BITS AND PIECES

**T**ired of racking your brain over adventure games? Tackle a more traditional puzzle—a computer jigsaw puzzle. Fit together the 7½" x 7½" floppy disk or the computer test pattern, then head back to the Great Underground Empire of Zork. (And don't forget the lantern this time.) Puzzles are \$4.00 each, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling. From Computer Personals, POB 376, Southhampton, PA 18966.



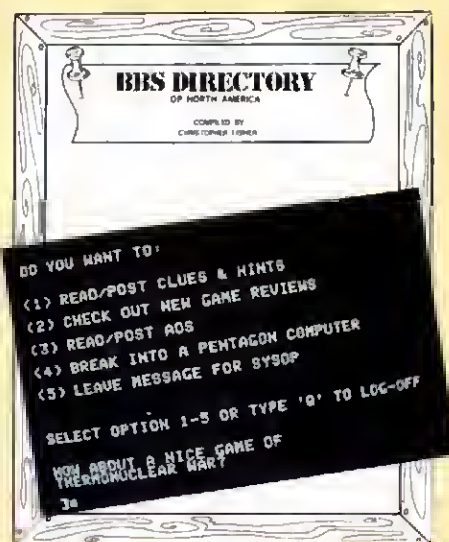
## FIRE COMMAND II

**Y**ou won't have to worry about dropping *this* joystick and shattering it into a thousand pieces—it's made of unbreakable heavy cast metal. (Just don't drop it on your foot.) The Fire Command II's five-pound weight keeps it stationary in your lap no matter how hard you twist the rugged eight-way stick. It duplicates the arcade feel more than anything else you'll find for home gaming. The Atari/Commodore versions (VC-2001) has arcade-style buttons; the ColecoVision model (VC-2001C) packs a pair on either side of the console. (A Reverse Y cable permits use of a keypad or trackball in conjunction with Fire Command II.) \$39.95 from GIM Electronics.



## APROM BY ANY OTHER NAME...

**A** cartridge-based EPROM (Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory) programmer, the Aprom is perfectly suited for Atari 800 owners who want to create and save games and other software on cartridge rather than disk. An optional Six Pack is a board that holds three sockets for EPROMS. The Aprom (\$99.50) and Six Pack (\$44.95) are available from Walling Company, 4401 Juniper, Tempe, AZ 85282. (602) 998-7550.



## FREE STUFF!

**F**ree games! Plus adventure hints and clues, all kinds of reviews, and the chance to trade, buy and sell computer and game-related gear. These are just a few of the advantages of plugging a modem into your computer and dialing into one of the thousands of independently operated bulletin board systems across this great nation. Unlike CompuServe and The Source, the typical BBS charges no fee for subscription or usage. You'll only pay for the normal cost of a phone call—unless you decide to access a system on the other side of the continent. For a state-by-state listing of bulletin boards currently on-line, the *BBS Directory* can't be topped. Published quarterly for \$5.95 an issue, it's available from BBS Directory, POB 4150, Beach Station, Vero Beach, FL 32964-4150.

# STATE OF THE ART

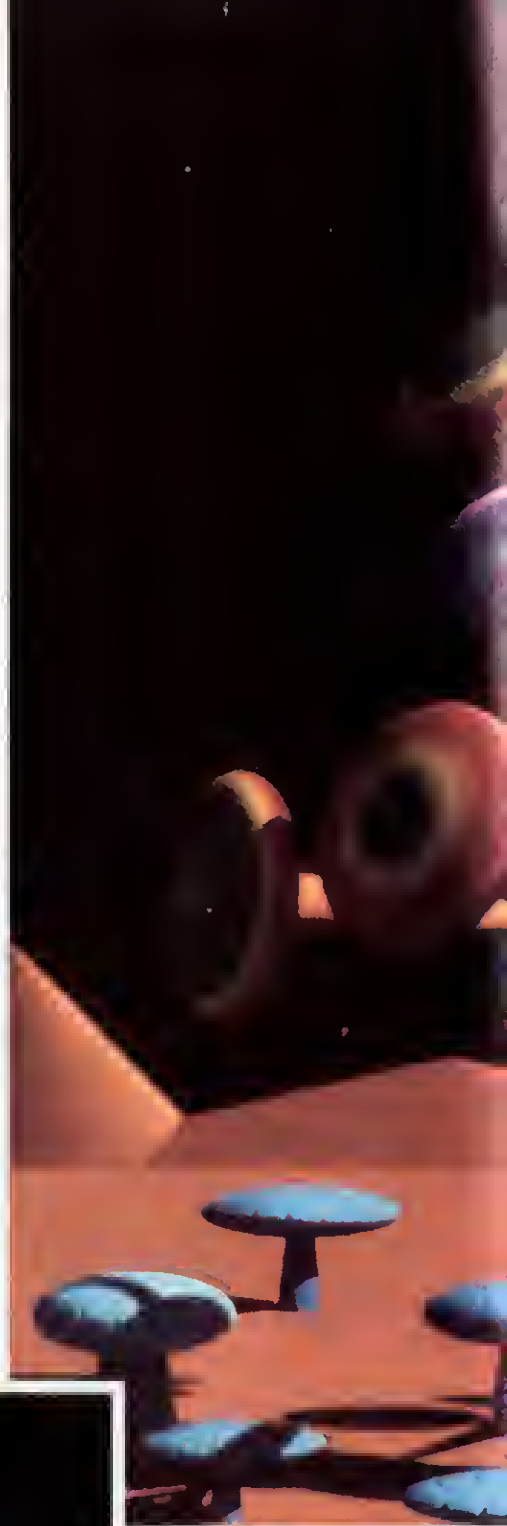
TODAY'S COMPUTER GRAPHICS -  
TOMORROW'S COMPUTER GAMES

Siggroph stands for "Special Interest Group For Graphics. That's *computer* graphics. At the first Siggroph convention in 1974, 600 artists, engineers and computer scientists gathered to celebrate the formation of this new art form. Ten years later, the show now attracts thousands. The images you see on these pages were not made by home computers. They were created by state of the art equipment costing in the millions of dollars. Still, when you compare *Pong* with the games we're playing today, you can see how far technology can change in a very short time. And it won't be long

before we'll be playing computer games that look very much like the computer graphics you see here.



Left—by Frank Deitrich, of West Coast University. Above—by Peter Wotterberg, of Sandia National Labs.

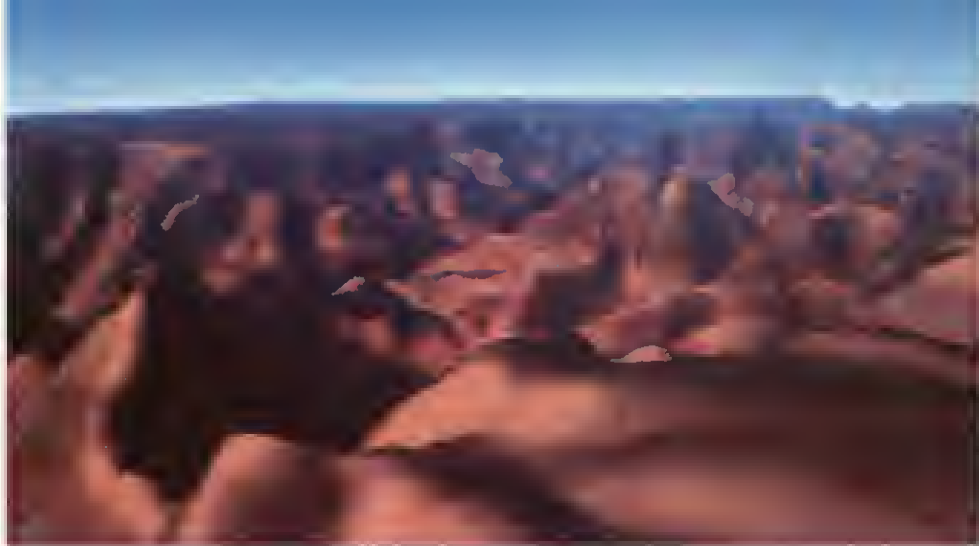




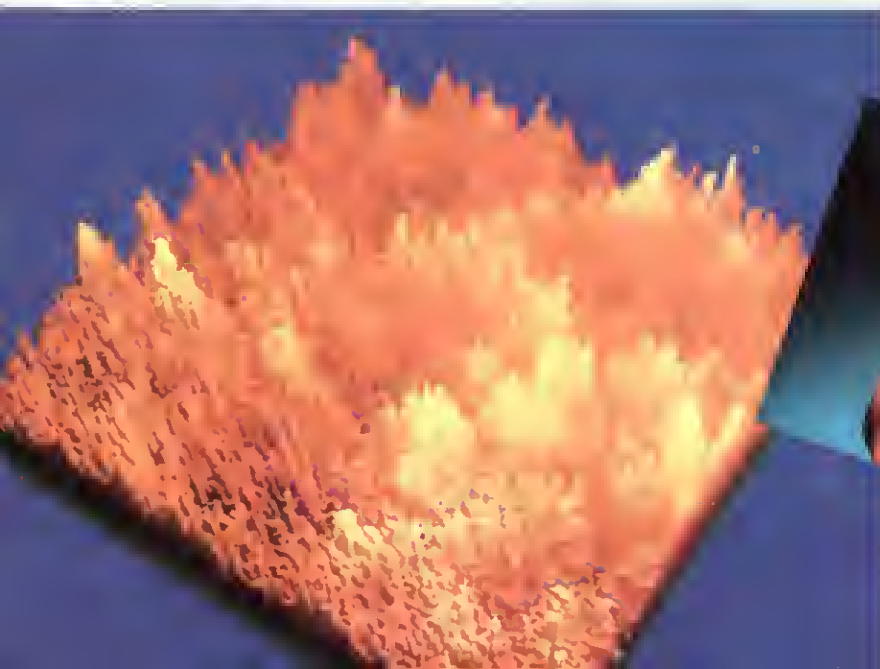


Right—by Jim Dixon, of Cratalus Digital, Inc.  
Top right—by Lexidata Corporation, and Patricia Search, of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

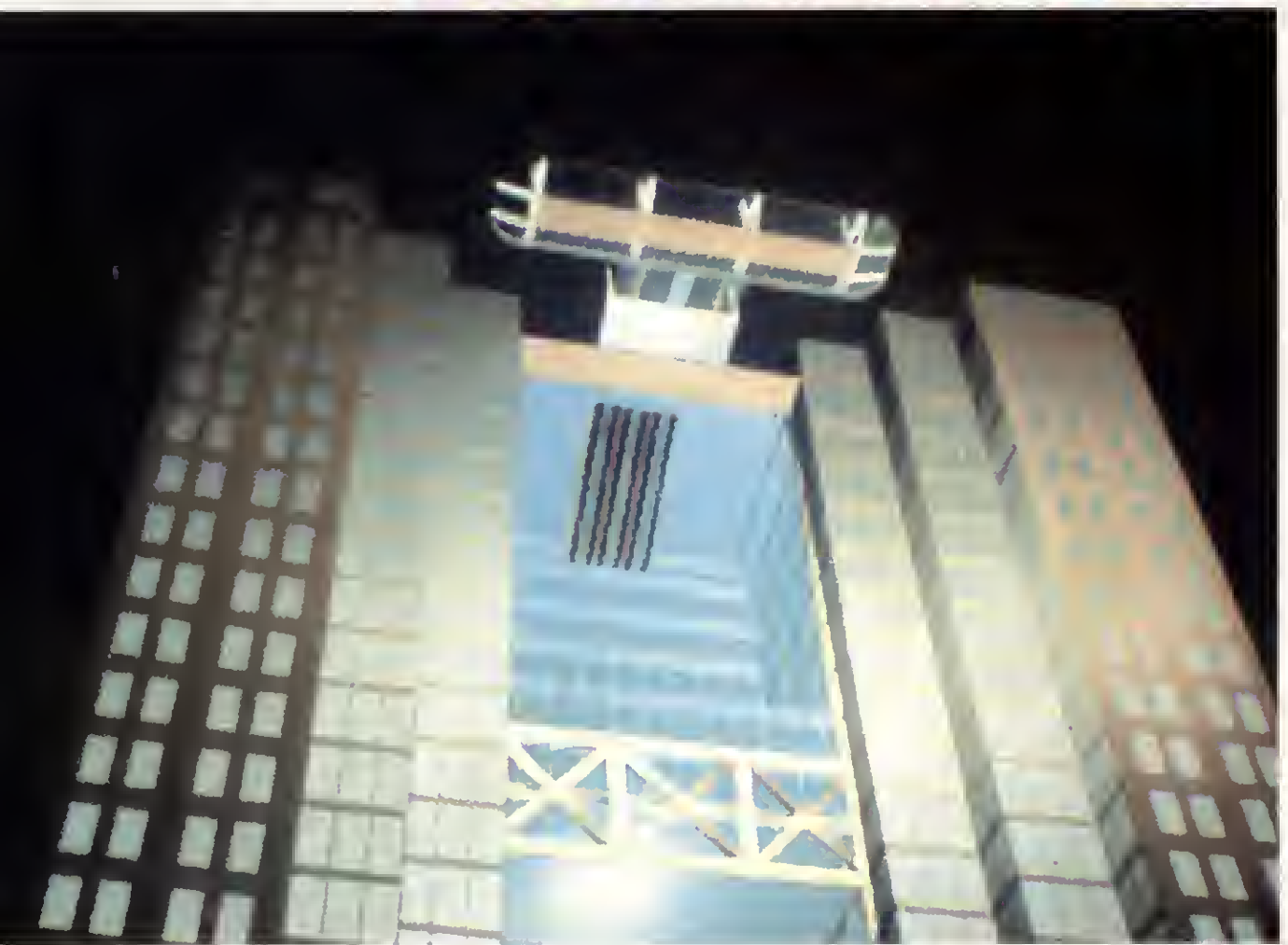
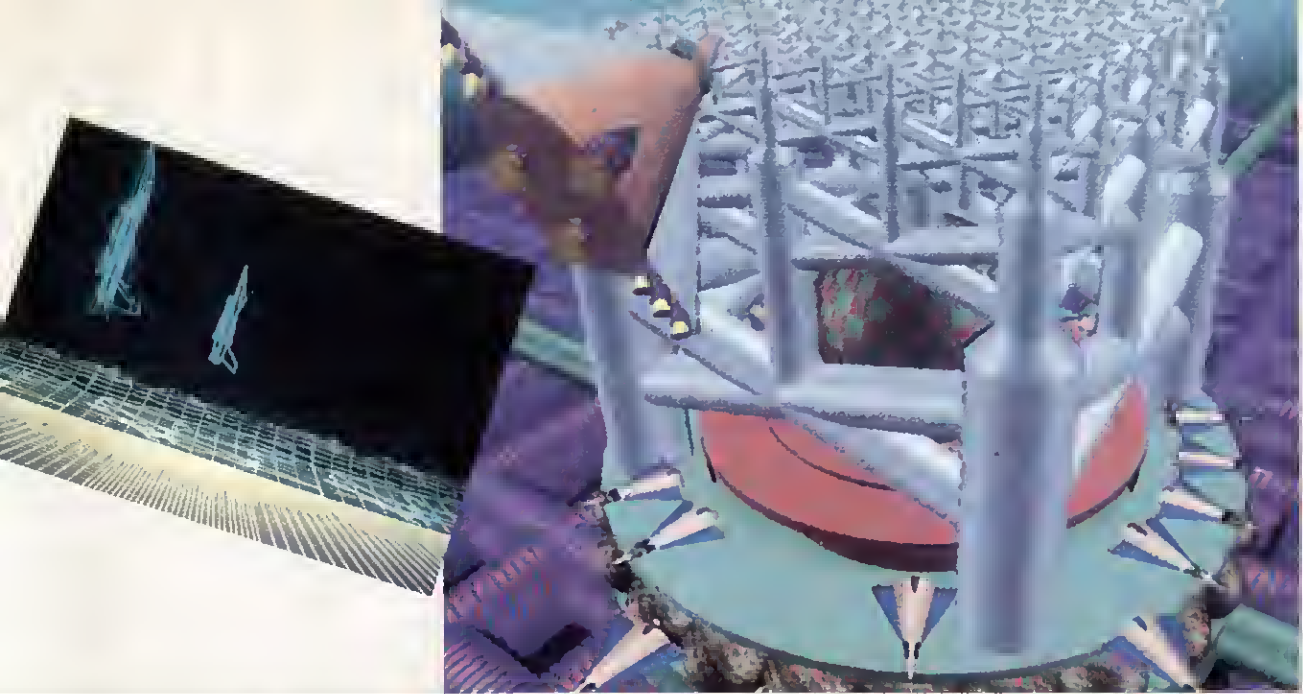




Above—by John E. Aldag, of Cray Research. Below—David A. Cooper, of Hewlett-Packard. Bottom—by Franz Herbert, of Nippon Electronics College, and Yoichiro Kawaguchi, also of Nippon Electronics College.







Top—by John A. Archdeacon, of Gemini Technology Corporation, and by David Komins, of Boston University. Above—by Cranston/Csuri Productions

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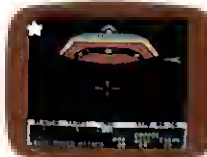
•Suggested Retail Price \$34.95

Look to Access Software for a complete line of action and educational programs such as:  
Available for Commodore 64 ★ Atari★

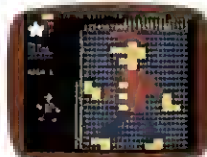
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1984

# The Year in Computers

By Dan Gutman



It was the best of times, as they say. And it was the absolutely the worst possible of times. Computer companies started on kitchen tables and made millions. Million dollar companies went belly up. A lot of people jumped into the computer business hoping to become multimillionaires in a year, and a few of them did. Most of the time, though, they lost their shirts and were never heard from again. Spectacular new products were introduced, others were discontinued. More people than ever bought computers, while articles appeared announcing that the computer revolution had gone bust.

More than anything else, computers *evolved*. We've only had these fascinating machines for seven years. The industry is in its infancy, so the chaos we are seeing is natural. Each year, technological innovations appear and users get more sophisticated. Someday, perhaps, the computer industry will get its head on straight. Until then, here are some of the highlights of this confusing year....

# The Year in Computers

## NEW COMPUTERS



### MACINTOSH

Apple's Macintosh knocked the socks off just about everybody, despite its monochromatic screen and \$2,500 price tag. The machine is the first really user-friendly computer—anybody can get it up and running in minutes. The graphic resolution is so crisp, you don't even feel like you're looking at a computer screen.



### COLECO'S ADAM

For all those people who break out in hives at the thought of buying a computer and a printer and a storage device, Coleco released Adam—the first computer system in a box. It was a great idea. Adam got into some trouble early. Coleco missed their release date by about four months, and 30% of the first Adams turned out to be defective. The kinks have been ironed out now, and the only thing holding back Adam is its reputation. It's not a bad little computer for students and beginners. Especially the price—\$700 complete.



### "PEANUT" IBM'S PCJR

The long awaited Peanut finally arrived with a dull thud one day back in November. This was the computer that was going to "legitimize" home computers and dominate the home market in the same way IBM's PC dominated the business market. It didn't happen, at least not at the start. The Junior was roundly criticized. The keyboard was made of Chiclets. It didn't run important business packages like Lotus 1-2-3. It cost too much money. There was no software.

The PCjr didn't sell nearly as well as IBM had hoped, and lo and behold, in July IBM called a press conference. They never admitted they had made a mistake, but they *did* unveil a *new* version of the PCjr. This time it had a full-stroke keyboard and added memory. It's too early to tell whether or not the new PCjr will be the success IBM is hoping for.



### REACH OUT AND TOUCH THE SCREEN

Though the keyboard may be the best way we have to put letters and words into a computer's memory (until voice-recognition capability is feasible), it is a little unwieldy to use the keyboard for other functions. Moving the cursor and moving blocks of text are easier to do using other methods. The Hewlett-Packard 150 is one of the first computers with a touch screen—you just put your finger against the screen and characters and letters move around, as if by magic. Actually, touch screens use tiny beams of light and work on the same principle as burglar alarms and those doors that open automatically in supermarkets, banks and airports. Light pens also became popular this year.



# The Year in Computers



## LET'S GET SMALL

ENIAC, the first computer, was two stories high and weighed thirty tons. It ran on 18,000 vacuum tubes and used up so much juice at The University of Pennsylvania that when it was turned on, lights would dim in Philadelphia. Since that time, computers have gotten smaller and smaller. This year, with new machines like the Apple IIc, Radio Shack Model 100 and Hewlett Packard Portable (pictured here), we can pack more power than ENIAC into an eight-pound case and sit it on our laps.



## ATARI 7800

When Atari killed their 5200, they introduced a new game machine, the 7800. It featured some remarkable graphics. There was a new version of *Asteroids*, for instance, that had rounded boulders for you to shoot at. The 7800 could also be expanded into a computer with a full-stroke keyboard.

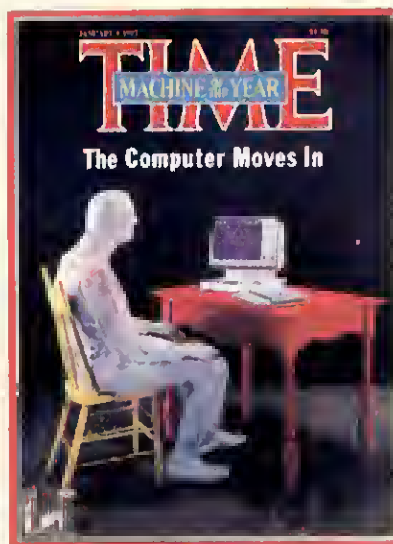
When Atari was sold in July, the status of the 7800 became uncertain. As we go to press, the machine has still not been released.

## TIME MARCHES ON...



**JAN. 18, 1982**

No phenomenon is a *real* phenomenon until it gets on the cover of *Time* magazine. By the time *Time* caught the wave, they were able to announce that video arcade games had swallowed 20 billion quarters, taken up 75,000 man-years, and earned twice the take of the casinos in Nevada... in *one* year. And that didn't include home games, which were just beginning.



**JAN. 3, 1983**

Just a year later, arcade games were fading and the home computer was beginning to make video game systems obsolete. *Time* shocked the world by naming the computer "Machine of the Year"—the first time in 55 years a human was not honored. *Time* devoted 19 pages to the story, and spelled Macintosh "Mackintosh."



**APRIL 16, 1984**

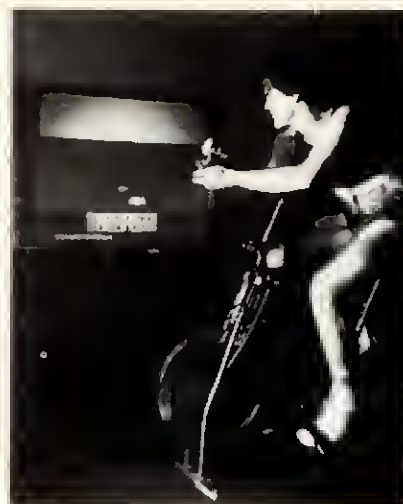
This time, *Time* said, "a computer is little more than a hunk of plastic and silicon that might as well be used as a doorstop." It's the *software* that is the soul of the machine. No hardware was seen giving back its Machine of the Year Award. Bill Gates, who graced the cover, created Microsoft BASIC and the MS-DOS operating system.

# The Year in Computers



## SPACE ACE SHOT DOWN

*Dragon's Lair* begat *Space Ace*, another spectacularly animated laserdisc game from Don Bluth, Rick Dyer and Cinematronics. In this one we were turned into kids when struck by the evil Borf's Infanto ray. But the novelty of *Dragon's Lair* had worn off, and *Space Ace* was much less of a success. Laser games in general failed to save the faltering arcade industry. It wasn't that they weren't a good idea—the games were simply boring.



## WEIRD CONTROLLERS

Suncom came out with The Aeorbic Joystick, a device that you hook up to your exercise bicycle. The faster you pedal, the faster you move on the screen. It didn't work too well with *Pac-Man*.

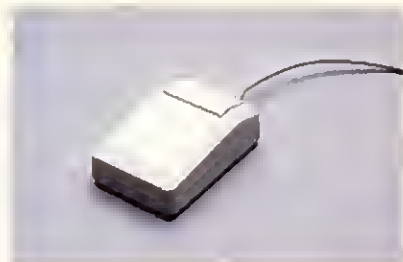


## ROBOTS: THE NEXT BIG THING

If you had invested in computers seven years ago, you'd be a millionaire today. So what can you invest in today that will make you a million in seven years? A lot of people are betting on robots. Several companies, such as Nolan Bushnell's Androbot, introduced home robots this year with computer brains. Right now they don't do much more than wheel around, make funny noises and look cute. But at a robotics convention, robots were starting to do practical things like mow lawns and vacuum floors. Bushnell said he just wants a robot to bring him a beer now and then.



Just as the movie *Wargames* came out, it was discovered that hackers from all over the country were using their home computers and modems to break into restricted data banks.



Goodbye cursor control keys. The mouse started to catch on as a pointing device. Apple's Macintosh was the first popular home computer to come with its own mouse.



## "EDUTAINMENT"

Educational software became the fastest-growing branch of the industry. Characters like Charlie Brown, Donald Duck and Miss Piggy were quickly licensed and turned into "courseware." Most of it was junk.



# The Year in Computers



## A WISE GUY, EH?

Mylstar (*Q\*Bert*, *M.A.C.H. 3*) cashed in on The Three Stooges revival with a new arcade game starring everybody's favorite boneheads.



First Star's *Boulder Dash* was the first home game to become an arcade game.

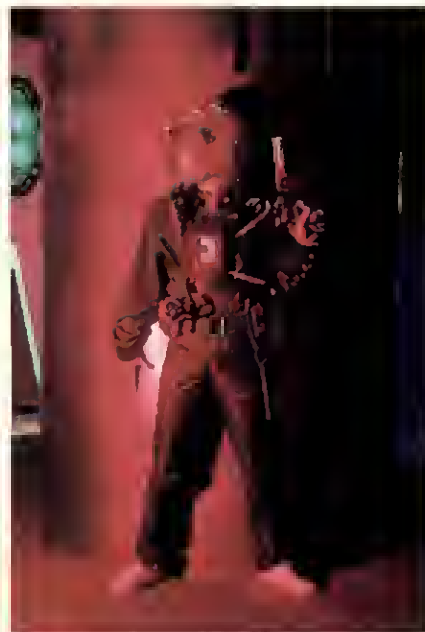


Amiga's Joyboard controller. You'd stand on it, but nobody could stand it.



## BE A COMPUTER PICASSO

Light pens, touch tablets and various art programs gave us the capability of drawing pictures on our television screens. For the artists of tomorrow, paint and canvas may be obsolete.



## THE LIVING COMPUTER GAME

Dallas-based "Planet Photon" opened, and adventurous players could don space suits and helmets, and shoot the daylights out of each other. Four computers control the operation. Players wear vests with microprocessors, and when they get hit by a beam of light fired by another player, the player's phaser gun gets turned off for ten seconds. Points are won and lost and an electronic scoreboard records the action. Three dollars buys a six-minute game. Computer games are beginning to leap off the screen and into the third dimension.



Infocom chiefs Joel Berez, Marc Blank and Al Vezza celebrate the company's fifth anniversary. They've thrilled millions with *Deadline*, *Zork*, *Starcross*, *Planetfall* and other all-text adventures.

# The Year in Computers

## RELATED PHENOMENA



While Coleco's Adam computer suffered due to defects and a lack of software, their Cabbage Patch Dolls became the biggest thing since the Hula Hoop. Meanwhile, in just one year Trivial Pursuit topped 50-year-old Monopoly as the best-selling board game in history. Computer trivia games quickly followed.

## WINNERS



Mark Reid won \$25,000 and the Atari Star Award for his fast-action game *Getaway!* The Atari Program Exchange, which sponsored the contest, was discontinued shortly thereafter in the Atari budget cuts of 1984. A few months later, Atari itself was sold.



Perry Rodgers of Napa, California, played *Centipede* for 19 consecutive hours, racking up over nine million points. He won an arcade game from *Computer Games*.

## DEATHS IN THE FAMILY



### THE VCS COMPUTER

Three companies announced keyboards for the Atari VCS. None were ever released.



### PHONY GAMES

Control Video Corporation's Gameline was supposed to bring us hot VCS games over telephone lines. It flopped.



### ATARI 1200

Atari scored a first—the only home computer that was incompatible with itself. Actually, the main problem was a number of internal flaws that prevented it from running enough third-party software. And second... and first... it was killed.



# The Year in Computers



## SPECTRAVIDEO

We never saw this computer in any store, and we don't know anybody who ever owned one. But they advertised like crazy in computer magazines and even hired Roger Moore to pose in their ads. Spectravideo sent us a review copy of the SV-318, but we couldn't get any of the programs to load. For the rest of the year we used it as a table for our TV set. The Company went Chapter 11 sometime during the summer.



## ATARI 5200

Intended to compete with ColecoVision, the 5200 eventually died because it wasn't expandable in any way. The joysticks were probably the worst ever designed, and they make playing games like *Vanguard* and *Ms. Pac-Man* nearly impossible. In June the 5200 was replaced by the 7800, but that's another story. Readers who bought the 5200 should be able to pick up cheap software for it, but few new titles.

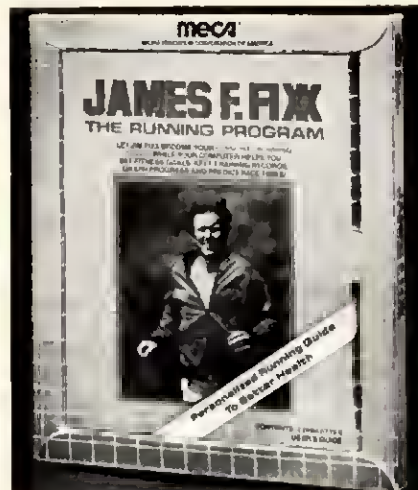


## PLAY BALL! GAME OVER!

By the time word got out that some Texas Instruments TI99/4A computers were giving people electric shocks, the handwriting was on the wall. Even Bill Cosby couldn't save them. After losing millions of dollars, Texas Instruments finally pulled out of the home computer business entirely.

TI got caught in the Commodore price war. The TI99/4A was a more powerful computer than the Commodore VIC-20, but as the price of the VIC dropped to \$300, then \$200, and finally below \$100, Texas Instruments had to drop their price, too. At the end they were selling it for less than it cost them to make it. After the company pulled out of the business, we could get the TI for just \$50. It had been introduced at more than \$1000.

Just before the TI99/4A died, Milton Bradley demonstrated an outrageous voice system that came with a speech-controlled baseball game. You could yell "First base!" and the ball would be thrown there. That's one game that got cancelled.



## JIM FIXX

Running guru Jim Fixx died while jogging, and MECA shelved *The Jim Fixx Running Program*.



## SUPER GAMES

Coleco could barely suppress its excitement over their Super Game Module, which plugged into ColecoVision and would allow us to play 100 different screens of *Donkey Kong*. It disappeared without a trace when they introduced the Adam computer. Who wants to play 100 screens of *Donkey Kong* anyway?



## ODYSSEY TOO

One of the first video game machines cashed in its chips this year. The Odyssey<sup>2</sup> came out about the same time as the Atari VCS, but didn't have a game like *Space Invaders* to go with it. The membrane keyboard and optional voice module failed to sell the system.

# The Year in Computers

## COMPUTER PEOPLE



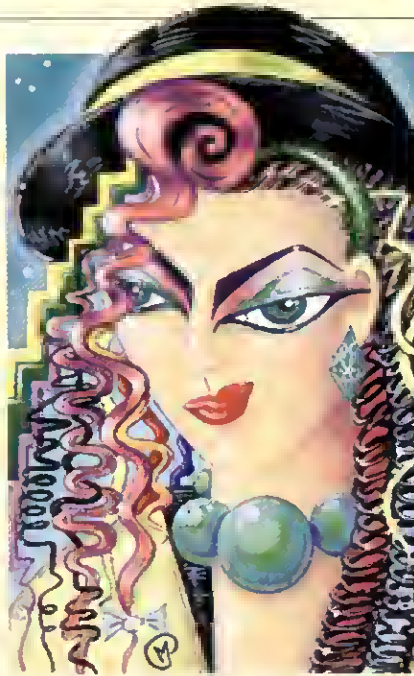
### HI-PRES

The President and Nancy hit the campaign trail with computers this year. The First Lady is shown here guiding Ms. Pac-Man through her paces with Brian Thomas at the Children's Hospital in Washington.



### WHAT NEXT?

Nolan Bushnell started Atari in 1971 for just \$250. He sold it six years later for \$28 million. Then Atari lost \$500 million. After Atari, Bushnell started Pizza Time Theater and made another hundle before they went bankrupt. This year Nolan started Androbot, a robot company, and Sente, an arcade game company. Neither has achieved the success of his earlier ventures, and Sente has already heep sold. Bushnell continues to search for The Next Big Thing.



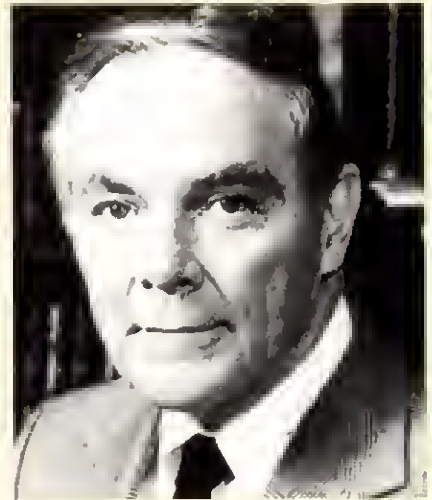
### BANK STREET DRAG QUEEN?

Boy George rose to superstardom as lead singer of the rock group Culture Club. They sang some of the songs and appeared in the movie *Electric Dreams*, about a boy who falls in love with his computer. Boy and the boys also record for Virgin Records, which distributes Quicksilva Software in the United States.



### ALDAWARE

Alan Alda signed a \$10 million deal with Atari to promote their computers for five years. The money was good, but after Atari was sold, Alan was saying great things about some computers that may be pulled off the market.



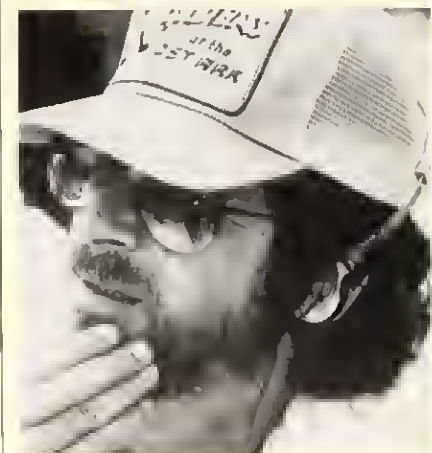
### HAIGWARS

Alexander Haig is now on the Commodore Board of Directors, so buy the Plus/4 or eat lead, Commies!



### HELLO?

Tom Selleck has absolutely nothing to do with computers.



### E.T. WHO?

Steven Spielberg sold the rights to *E.T.* to Atari for \$22 million. The game was a dud, but they still bought the rights to *Gremlins*.



# THE HOTLINE

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NEW YORK...PARIS...LONDON...CAMBRIDGE...

Update on the Atari/Jack Tramiel/Commodore shocker from last issue: Jack slashed all prices on Atari computers, making the 800XL even lower than the Commodore 64. This should continue until after Christmas, when it looks like the entire Atari line may be replaced by new 8, 16, and 32 bit computers. We still haven't seen the Atari 7800 game machine anywhere, so we have to assume it has been shelved. Meanwhile, Commodore purchased Amiga, who had developed their remarkable "Lorraine" computer. This machine is supposed to be as spectacular as Apple's Macintosh, but sell for less than \$1000. Now Commodore owns it, and it may be the next logical upgrade from the C-64. We hear Jack is frantically searching for a similar machine for the "new" Atari.

IN OTHER NEWS: Coleco's Adam computer seems to have recovered from its early problems and is starting to sell briskly, especially now that they are offering a \$500 college scholarship to anyone that buys one. So if you already own a ColecoVision and you buy the Adam Expansion Module for \$500, you are basically getting an entire computer system for free.

Activision is coming out with their first licensed game title--Ghoatbusters. David Crane has done the programming and the game should be out by Christmas for the Commodore 64 and Apple line...Looking for a good games magazine? Well, if you can't find Computer Games, we strongly recommend Computer Entertainer, a newsletter filled with news and reviews (but no clues) of all the latest games...Did you know that Bill Wyman, bass guitarist for the Rolling Stones, is a computer fanatic? Tom Snyder's latest game is Rock 'n Rhythm--you put together your own band--drums, bass, keyboard, etc.--and record your own songs on disk. It should be out soon for the Atari and C-64. Snyder also has a non-violent "war" game about to come out.

The computer manufacturers are jumping on fads as fast as they can. Look for about ten new trivia programs coming out, all based on the success of Trivial Pursuit. Some of them are pretty good (Fax, Trivia Fever) but none of them are as good as the original. The questions in Trivial Pursuit are more clever. There will also be a slew of breakdance games coming out from Epyx, Creative Software, and Screenplay. Breakdancing games?! And Apple has just announced they're coming out with a line of sportswear with the Apple insignia on it. You can bet that the next hula hoop that comes along will be available for the Commodore 64 a few months later.

As you may or may not have guessed, this is the last issue of Computer Games that will be edited by yours truly, Dan Gutman and Shay Addams. We will be moving on to bigger and better things (Dan plans to write The Great American Pamphlet, Shay will journey to the land of Xuluui to research his new adventure game, Quest For Hoffa). If we've succeeded these last two years in bringing you the latest news, clues, and reviews in the world of computer gaming, great. If we haven't, well, you got ripped off. In any case, we wish you all the best of luck in the future. And keep any eye out for our new book--From Archon To Zork, The World's All-Time Greatest Computer Games--which will be published by Simon & Schuster in February.

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**CALL THE COMPUTER GAME HOTLINE (212) 581-8267**

# Which Computer Should You Buy?

*The good, the bad and the obsolete*

Once upon a time, in a computer store far, far away, life was much simpler for anyone shopping for a new computer. You bought an Apple, Atari, or a Commodore—or maybe an IBM if you happened to have won the lottery during breakfast. Now each of these hardware hunchos offers up to a half-dozen different models, sometimes software-compatible with their silicon siblings, more often not. And dozens of manufacturers have flung themselves lemming-like into the media-agitated furor of America's "Quest for Home Computers." Each heralds its entry as the state of the art—but in today's gimmicky marketplace, state of the art can mean the computer comes with a joystick built into the keyboard. To further muddy these murky waters, the industry has increasingly relied on "official spokespeople" to peddle their wares. With Sam Deluise, Bill Bixby, Alan "Hawkeye" Alda, John Cleese and that Charlie Chaplin clone hamming it up in TV spots, the computer commercials have become more entertaining than informative.

Even bladdied veterans of the Computer Revolution shake their byte-banded heads and habble off to the nearest pub when confronted with the necessity of upgrading their system—so what does a raw recruit do in this bewildering situation? Turn the page, because we've already weeded out the good from the bad, ugly and obsolete, so all you have to do is scan these pages and decide which computers to investigate firsthand. Each of the top home computers has been evaluated in terms of its best features and worst character flaws. And we've indicated the kinds of applications for which each is best-suited.

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT BURGER





## APPLE IIc

### POSITIVE

The IIc is compatible with 90-95% of the thousands of programs that run on the Apple IIe. The IIc is about the same as the IIe functionally, but it weighs just 7 1/2 pounds and fits in a briefcase. The 5 1/4 inch disk drive is built right into the side of the unit.

The machine is good-looking—it looks a little like E.T. from the side. (The exterior was designed by Hartmut Esslinger, who designed the Sony Walkman.) It includes a volume control, headphone jack, RF modulator and a splash pad under the keys in case of spills. You can plug the IIc into the cigarette lighter of your car.

Like the Macintosh, the IIc is designed for novices. Simple icons make it easy to hook up, and only a few cables are necessary. You don't need confusing interface cards to attach peripherals. The IIc comes with a six-disk computer literacy course. There is a good tactile feel and audible click when you press a key. The IIc was designed to be as easy to use as a TV set or stereo.

The IIc also features a 40-80 column switch, "double hi-res" mode graphics capability, and optional flat panel display and battery pack.

### NEGATIVE

This little computer generates a lot of heat. Apple had to put air vents on top, so the monitor has to hang over the computer like a basketball backboard. If you use another brand you'll have to raise it or move it off to the side.

The IIc is fine for users, but hackers may not like it. The IIc has a "closed

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**"You  
can't open up the  
IIc to add a hard  
disk, cards, or  
just to hack  
around, as with  
previous Apples."**

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architecture." You can't open it up to add expansion cards, a hard disk or just play around, as you could with previous Apples. The system is a self-contained box. This sacrifices flexibility and limits expandability.

But Apple already has a computer for hackers. This one is for people who don't want to open up their computers. Serious programmers should buy the IIe.

## ATARI 800XL

### POSITIVE

Atari is best known for its games, so it makes sense that the Atari home computers feature some of the best graphics and sound in an inexpensive machine.

The graphics are a bit better than the Commodore 64s, the sound a bit worse. Unlike Commodore's computers, all the Atari computers are compatible, so there is plenty of software, and there's no problem when you upgrade to a more powerful Atari computer. You can't beat the Atari as a game machine. Just about every hit arcade game has been made for the system, and these versions are generally better than versions for other systems. In addition to printers and disk drives, you can attach light pens, touch tablets, the AtariLab science module and several other peripherals to Atari computers. Also, Atari computers are built like tanks. They won't break down on you.

### NEGATIVE

But they may become obsolete. Warner Communications sold the company this summer, and new owner Jack Tramiel may very well kill off the entire line. We probably won't know his plans until the Consumer Electronics Show in January, but buying an Atari computer right now would not be a good long-term risk.

Even before the company was sold, Atari had its problems. After announcing products that were never released (The Graduate) and releasing products that were promptly discontinued (1200XL), Atari lost the confidence of just about everyone. The software companies stopped making programs for them. The retailers stopped stocking them. The public stopped buying them. The Commodore 64, just a few dollars cheaper, has gotten the lion's share of the business. Now that Atari is being run by the man who made Commodore what it is today, it will be interesting to see if they can come back.



*The IIc (above) and IIe (not shown) replaced Apple's II+ (middle bottom). The Atari 800 and VIC-20 (middle top) are extinct, but still a bargain if you can find either. IBM's PC (far right) is primarily for business purposes.*





## ADAM

### POSITIVE

You've got the whole thing in a box—keyboard, storage device, printer. No interfaces to worry about, no compatibility problems. You don't have to shop around. You can hook Adam up in minutes and begin word processing right away.

The detachable keyboard has a great feel to it, and you can use a joystick to move the cursor. Adam stores 18 pages of text in its memory, and page numbering is automatic. It features very good three-voice sound.

Coleco is starting to release software—*SmartLogo*, *SmartFiler*, *SimpleCalc*, *Smart Letters & Forms* and lots of educational programs. There is also a new disk drive for the machine, as well as a modem.

Adam is a very good game machine. It plays Adam games on tape, all ColecoVision cartridges, and (with expansion module) Atari VCS games. Most of the early bugs have been ironed out of the system, and Coleco has extended the warranty and contracted Honeywell to provide coast-to-coast service. Oh, let's not forget—the entire system is just \$700.

### NEGATIVE

What if you don't want to buy an entire system from one company? Not everybody does. The printer is the worst component. It's very slow (it takes a half an hour to print ten pages) and very loud. Don't buy Adam if you have thin walls. Oddly, the power supply is in the printer, so if the printer busts, the whole system is down.

The word processor can't underline, justify or make boldface letters. Scrolling

**"A  
revolution.  
Macintosh is the  
easiest computer  
in the world to  
use. It sucks  
people in like a  
magnet."**

is slow. The screen holds just 36 letters to the line. The data packs are better than ordinary cassette tapes, but not as good as a disk drive. The documentation is very simple and doesn't give enough information for advanced users. There is very little software for Adam so far, and there won't be much more until Coleco can convince the software companies and the public that Adam is a dependable machine. Adam is a great computer for a beginner. People with more experience may want to look elsewhere.

## MACINTOSH

### POSITIVE

A revolution. Macintosh is the easiest computer in the world to use. Instead of

having to read reams of instruction manuals, you will intuitively know how to use a Mac. It sucks people in like a magnet.

Instead of memorizing ridiculous codes, the Mac uses icons—little pictures. If you want to get rid of some text, you slide the cursor over to a picture of a garbage can, for example.

Macintosh uses a mouse to move the cursor, not cursor control keys. You can use the mouse to print, delete, move text, save to disk and several other functions.

Macintosh won't take up much of your desk space (it's vertical), and the whole thing weighs just 20 pounds. That includes the built-in disk drive and monitor, by the way. Since it's all one unit, you won't be overwhelmed by wires. Disks for Macintosh are just 3 1/2 inches. They can fit in a shirt pocket. They're sturdier, faster and more reliable than floppies, and they hold 400K.

Screen resolution is so sharp, you won't know you're looking at a screen. Apple's *MacWrite* and *MacPaint* programs show it off. You can use many type faces and type sizes and even simulate spray painting on the screen. You can design your own letterheads and greeting cards. Mac's sound capability is remarkable—four-voices and human speech.

Macintosh was a success from the start, which means lots of software (eventually), lots of support, and lots of computer fans clamoring for it.

### NEGATIVE

The Apple logo is rainbow-colored, but Mac has a monochrome display. That's something to think about if you plan to do graphics. Insiders say color is on the way.

Apple claims there should never be any reason to open the Mac up. That's fine for



*The Commodore 64 (far left) remains America's number one home computer. Peripherals include the 1541 disk drive, 1502 color monitor and a line of printers. Commodore also distributes a raft of entertainment and applications software for the 64. Atari's 800XL (top left) is a strange contender in the low-end market. The PCjr (bottom left) is IBM's first entry in the crowded home computer market.*

the novice, but experienced computerites might like to pull off the top and tinker with the insides. Under the hood is 128K of RAM, which won't handle the really big spreadsheets. Again, an advanced Mac with more memory is on the way.

Some users may resent having to take their hands off the keyboard to use the mouse, and others don't like that Mac is incompatible with any other computer. But the biggest problem with Macintosh is that we all want one but can't afford one. It's definitely the computer of the future, but \$2195 is too much to spend for a home machine.

## COMMODORE 64

### POSITIVE

\$189. That says it all. The C-64 is the most inexpensive computer in its class. That's why it's Everyman's Computer, and that's why they've sold three million of them. It features graphics that are nearly comparable to Atari's, and sound that is second to nobody. The triple voice SID chip has made possible some incredible music programs that can turn this baby into a real synthesizer. You can simulate every sound from gunshots to babies crying.

The 64 is a good step up from the VIC-20. Software is not compatible, but joysticks and modems are. All peripherals

**"The C-64's graphics are nearly comparable with Atari's, and it has sound that is second to nobody."**

are very inexpensive. Software is very plentiful now, and the 64 is capable of doing word processing, spreadsheets and playing games. You can easily hook it up to your television, a monitor, or even both at the same time.

### NEGATIVE

The 64 is not the most reliable machine in the world. The words "30% defective rate" have been used. We can attest to that—this office has gone through three

64s in the last year. Sometimes it's the power cord, other times the output doesn't put out. Be prepared to run back and forth to the store a few times. Replacement parts are usually scarce and service is notoriously slow. Save your receipt.

The 64 is inexpensive, but you can't do much with it unless you buy a disk drive (\$230). The Commodore disk drive is in short supply, loads programs very slowly and also is prone to breakdowns. Once you add a printer, monitor, and modem, you're almost up to \$1,000. You'll also have a desk that looks like the snakepit in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Other problems: The keyboard is weird. They stuck the apostrophe out in Siberia (over the number 7) and the quotation mark key over the number two. They should be by the right pinky! They also put the delete key right next to the CLR HOME key, so it's easy to zip the cursor to the top of the screen when you're just trying to delete a letter. In other cases, you have to hit two keys to move the cursor left or up.

## APPLE IIe

### POSITIVE

The Apple II line (including the II, II Plus, IIe and IIc) will run more programs than any other home computer. Business programs, games, astrology programs, you name it. There are tens of thousands



*The Apple IIe (above) maintained its lead in the educational market, with hundreds of related programs. Apple's Macintosh (top middle) was 1984's most exciting new system, sold with a built-in 3 1/2" disk drive and offering amazing ease-of-use. Unprecedented hi-res color graphics and IBM PC compatibility are the strong points of the Mindset (top right). And the bugs were finally worked out of Caleca's Adam (right).*





of them. This line is over seven years old now, but nearly every new program is made for the Apple. The entire line is pretty much compatible, and since millions of Apples have been sold worldwide, it is the closest thing to a "standard" in home computers. Most likely some of your neighbors have them, so you'll be able to swap programs.

The IIe is made for both hackers and novices. If you want to rip off the cover and mess around with the insides, you can. There are seven expansion slots in there for a wide variety of plug-in boards, including 80 columns and CP/M. The IIe is expandable to 128K. You can also add a hard disk. And with the release of the Apple IIc, the price of the IIe has dropped substantially.

#### NEGATIVE

The IIe is easier to use than the II or II Plus, but it's still far from user-friendly. It'll take you a few hours to set the machine up, and a lot longer to figure it out. You may find you'll have to buy an add-on card or interface for some applications, and you'll have to take off the cover and insert them into a very intimidating jumble of circuits. That's fine for computer hackers, but beginners don't want to mess with that.

The IIe lacks a numeric keypad, which even Franklin's Appleclones have. And \$900 is a lot of money to spend on a computer with just 64K when you consider that Atari and Commodore are selling their machines for \$200. The best reason to buy the IIe is to be able to run the wealth of software that is available for it.

### MINDSET

#### POSITIVE

You will see images on the Mindset screen that cannot be produced on any other computer. The resolution is sharper than the Macintosh, but in color. The colors are spectacular, and there are 512 of them. There are 11 resolution modes, the sharpest of which is 640 X 400 pixels. With graphics like this, it's possible to do incredible animation of 200 objects on the screen at the same time. You can create very detailed drawings, and the Mindset has the potential to be the finest game machine ever. The graphics program, Lumina, can support eight pen widths, 16 colors at a time, and even produce an airbrush effect.

The Mindset is 80% IBM compatible. It will run popular business programs like Lotus, Wordstar, Microsoft Word and

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**"Clucking  
away like a  
neurotic chicken,  
the IBM PCjr  
'features' the  
noisiest disk  
drive on the  
planet."**

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*Multiplan.* Infocon has translated all its games for the Mindset. The computer is compatible with a color ink jet printer, a mouse (which can be plugged into either side), and it will support both videotex and stereo sound if it's ever available. If you like crowds, the sound chip can handle four voices at the same time. The Mindset is also a joy just to look at—it's the only computer in the design collection at The Museum of Modern Art. It weighs just 20 pounds.

#### NEGATIVE

Like the Macintosh, the Mindset's worst point is its price. \$2,000 is simply out of reach for a family computer. The graphics are spectacular, but right now there is very little software for the Mindset, so there isn't much you can do on it. Until the software is developed, the only people who can get full use of the machine are artists, draftsmen and architects.

### IBM PCJR

#### POSITIVE

The PCjr has a 12-month warranty, while most computers are on their own after 90 days. You can also count on reliable repair services, because service is what IBM's all about. A lot of the PC's business software will run on the jr, whose memory is now expandable up to 512K. The new keyboard is a big improvement on the original "Chicklets". And the jr's 640 x 200 hi-res mode and 16 colors are capable of remarkable graphics. The three-voice sound chip also

complements the jr's potential for entertainment software.

#### NEGATIVE

It's one of the slowest home computers ever. An equivalent assembly language program runs twice as fast on the Commodore 64. Some games, Sierra's *Mr. Cool* for example, are so painfully slow that they're completely unplayable. You won't have to worry about falling asleep at the keyboard, though—not with the world's noisiest disk drive clucking away like a neurotic chicken. For all practical purposes, the technological innards of the machine were obsolete long before IBM attempted to fob off the jr on a public that proved far more knowledgeable about computers than the company had expected. The price has been slashed, but you still have to shell out more money for TV connectors and every miscellaneous cable.

### HOW NOT TO BUY A HOME COMPUTER

Don't walk into the store and say, "Hey, what can I get for \$5,000?" Do your homework first. Decide what you and other family members will be doing with the machine, then cull the list of computers in your price range and head for the store. Be sure you can spend some time actually working with the system. Check out the keyboard for comfort and the monitor for readability. Try several different computers before finally taking the plunge. Then shop for the best price.

Mail order usually saves money, but few mail order houses will service your equipment. Even if they do so, there's time wasted while the unit is in transit. So no matter where you buy your computer, inquire first about service and repairs. It's best to deal with someone offering in-house repairs rather than with a retailer who will simply ship a faulty computer back to the manufacturer. Some companies have service centers and hotlines around the country, while others don't.

It's also good to buy your entire system at the same place, even if you don't buy it all at once. The reason is that if something goes wrong and you can't identify the problem, the salesman who sold you the computer may say, "Oh, we can't help you because it sounds like a problem with the disk drive (or printer, etc.) you bought somewhere else." And the person who sold you the other piece of gear will echo this excuse. Another advantage is that many dealers will give you a discount when you buy a complete system.

# CLUES BEAT IT! PUNCH OUT

By Bob Guerra

Whether you're the neighborhood bully or a 90-pound weakling, *Punch Out* throws you into the ring against six of the greatest video pugilists ever to don boxing gloves. Each bout lasts three minutes, and you can't be saved by the bell. If you fail to knock out your opponent in the time allotted, the game ends. Also, the third time an opposing boxer sends you down for the count, you're down to stay.

Your boxer (the guy with the "see-through" back) is controlled with a joystick and three buttons. When the joystick is pushed forward, your guard is up and the two central buttons throw lefts and rights to the head. With the joystick pulled back, your guard is down and you can unleash "body blows." Moving the joystick to the left or right causes your boxer to dodge.

The knob-like button on the far right controls your knock-out punch, but can only be used when the punching power indicator reaches the "KO" level. With the joystick in the forward position, your KO punch is a vicious right hook. With the stick pulled back, it's a powerful uppercut.

At the beginning of each bout a bonus timer begins counting down from 30,000. When you knock out an opponent, you receive the points left on the timer.

## GLASS JOE

This guy can't fight his way out of a wet paper bag. Just pretend you're working on a heavy-bag and unload body blows and occasional head shots until you've built up your punching power to the KO level. Wait for an opening and deliver a well-placed knock-out punch.

If Joe manages to take a swing, don't even bother dodging. While some boxers float like butterflies, Glass Joe punches like one.

## PISTON HURRICANE

Piston, is one of the toughest boxers you'll face, because he erupts with a flurry of punches at several points during the bout. During the early going, you can wear him down with body blows and combinations to the head. Punch away until he positions his guard to block your punches and then switch to the open area.

Like all the boxers, Piston's eyes turn yellow when he's getting ready to throw a punch. Often, by sneaking in a head shot, you'll prevent him from ever taking a swing. But if he winds up or crouches for an uppercut, it's best to dodge to the right to avoid getting belted. When you return to center, he'll

be off-balance and you'll have a chance to stun him with your left.

Piston Hurricane can rain a devastating storm of punches down on an unwary opponent. Fortunately, the torrent is always preceded by Piston's moving off to the right for an instant. When this happens, rather than seeking shelter by dodging, simply let your left fist fly into the eye of the storm as it approaches.

## BALD BULL

Bull has a punch that could deck a quarter horse but, fortunately for us, he's not smart enough to throw it without giving plenty of advance notice.

Begin the bout by softening him up with plenty of left-hand body blows. When he finally catches on that you've been hitting him, move in with a series of rights to the head. Pretty soon Bald Bull will get mad and start to fight back, but this is where you can put him away.

Usually, before letting go with his right uppercut, Bald Bull will crouch down practically on one knee. When he does, dodge to the right as his fist cuts through the air beside you. Snap back into position and immediately throw a couple of quick lefts. Just remember, it's impossible to dodge while punching.

This "dodge and punch" technique is also the best way to handle Bald Bull when he charges from across the ring.

When he steps back he will charge in a series of three hops. Just as he hops the third time, dodge right and return with a left.

## KID QUICK

The first time most fighters encounter Kid Quick, they understand how he got the name. If you know the Kid's weakness, however, he'll never be quick enough to keep you away from a shot at the title.

In one sentence, the trick is "lead with the right." The right won't connect, but when Kid ducks under your blow, dodge to the right. The Kid will come up with a right hook that will miss by a mile, and you're home free with the left. Repeat the move as many times as necessary. When you get him all dazed and glassy-eyed, a knockout punch is all it takes to put him away.

## PIZZA PASTA

Like previous fighters, Pasta's most devastating punch is telegraphed. After slugging it out for a while he will close in with a series of low body blows. To end the clinch, the referee will yell "break." When he does, Pizza will come up swinging.

**"Look closely and you'll see his eyes turn yellow just as he's about to throw a punch. Sneak in a head shot."**





*Before Bald Bull hits you with a right uppercut, he'll usually crouch down on one knee. Just dodge to the right.*

Again, the "dodge right, counter with the left" strategy works just fine.

The other key to winning against Pizza is to take charge of the fight early. Hit him with everything you've got and mix it up to confuse him. When you connect solidly with a head shot, Pizza's mouth will drop open and his eyes will roll back. When you see you've got him dazed, punch away unmercifully.

### MR. SANDMAN

All that stands between you and the World Video Boxing Championship is some mountain with boxing gloves. Although Mr. Sandman punches like a locomotive and makes Bald Bull look like a featherweight, he isn't invincible.

Keep your guard up as much of the time as possible and sting him at every opportunity with that powerful left. Unlike previous boxers, Sandman wastes very little time between punches. After dodging to avoid Sandman's deadly right hook, you'll only have time for a quick one-two combination before sidestepping his equally potent left jabs.

When you knock him down for the first time, be ready to keep the pressure on when he gets back on his feet. Since your punching power will be at maximum, take advantage of every opportunity to sneak in a KO punch. Finally, have patience. A boxer this big will take a lot of punishment before he's ready to throw in the towel. When Sandman spins and crashes to the mat for the third time, the championship belt is yours!

**MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL: 125,000**

# HOW TO BEAT INFOCOM

By Ed Savin





## Top tips to whip Zork, Deadline and seven more all-text adventures

**E**very day at Computer Games, we get letters like these: "Help! I've been stuck in a cove in Zork II for four months." "What's behind the hollow wall in the back of the upstairs closet in Deadline?" "Why can't I gnusto the spell in the trunk in the bosement of the guild hall?" Our readers love Infocom's all-text adventure games, and when they get stuck, they turn to us for help.

Part of the fun of playing is solving the tough problems by yourself, so we're not going to print the complete solutions to these remarkable works of interactive fiction. But there are some general hints and procedures that most players find helpful and also odd to the enjoyment of playing. Many of the following tips apply to other adventure games as well.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WALTER WICK



## HOW MANY WORDS?

The parser is basically the player's input into the game. The Infocom parser understands 600 words or more. Regardless of what you may read, the "full sentence parser" is mostly hype. You'll save time and effort if you think of the Infocom parser as just a two-word parser with frills. Try to keep your phrases as simple as possible, but feel free to experiment with vocabulary. Remember that part of the object is to guess exactly what action the author has written into the game and wants you to figure out.

## SAVING THE GAME

Save your game frequently as you progress through the adventure, especially before experimenting with something that might kill you. Very rarely are there two ways to solve a problem. For example, if you used an object incorrectly at one point in the game and later reached a point where that object is needed, you must restore a save that was made just before you used the object in question. Saving along the way, eliminates a lot of unnecessary backtracking.

## OBJECTS

Examine everything thoroughly. Remember that many objects can be manipulated, have interiors, can hold liquids, etc. They may also have special properties. For example, the sword in the *Zork* series glows blue when danger is near and red when you're angered. Drop objects after they have been used once. Usually they aren't needed again and if they are, you can always go back and retrieve them. If you examine an object every which way and there is no further description of it, you can assume it isn't important.

## CHARACTERS

To speak to a character, you must use his name first. For example, to ask the thief to give you the stiletto, you would input: Thief, Give me the stiletto. Question the characters about objects, other characters and specific events. Examine the characters, too.

## ZORK I

*Zork* is a treasure hunt. The basic purpose of the game is to gather twenty treasures and store them in the trophy case. The Thief is your main obstacle to success, as he keeps robbing and/or killing you. He can be killed, but only after you're strong enough (accomplished by storing treasures in the trophy case) and have obtained the proper weapon (it's

sharp, but isn't the sword). As soon as you find a treasure, head for the house.

## ZORK II

There are another ten treasures to be found here, but the main goal is to defeat the Wizard of Frobozz. It's very important for you to figure out what's going on in the oddly angled rooms maze, and the purpose of the basket with the cloth bag. Attack the dragon and get him to follow you. If you know where to lead him, another problem can be solved indirectly.

## ZORK III

There are only seven points in this game, and you may get all seven and still not win. The scoring is based on "potential" accomplishments. The game may expect you to solve a problem and give you the point because you are on the verge (it thinks) of discovering it. Philosophy plays a role in *Zork III*. You must act kindly and charitably and still be very brave. Nearly every puzzle is tough, but they're always logical.

## ENCHANTER

Magic spells are used to solve puzzles in this game. Some are permanently inscribed in your Spell Book, others are scattered around or hidden. Finding the spell scrolls and figuring out what to use them on is the key to victory. This is ultimately done by destroying Krill, the evil wizard. Some locations are red herrings. The winding stair is endless and must be destroyed. One puzzle involves a maze haunted by an unseen terror. (Use the map and pencil.) Nearly all the spells are used. An important and significant "summoning" is required. Pay careful attention to your dreams.

## SORCERER

More magic. Frotz yourself quickly, then head out to find Belboz, who's been snatched by Jeeaar. Mail coupons before the mailman arrives. Use the Infotater to unlock the chest in the basement. Some spells must be "learned" twice for best results. Save after each problem is solved. Be sure you have the orange potion before yonking the.... In the coal area, you finally get to use the timber from *Zork I*. *Sorcerer's* end game, after the time travel sequence, is particularly difficult. Save the vezza spell for the very end.

## STARCROSS

There's heavy emphasis on object manipulation in this one, but many objects are color-coded to make things easier. Mapping is far simpler than with

the *Zorks*. The colored rods serve as treasures and must be inserted into proper slots. A knowledge of chemistry, especially electron dot diagrams, is very helpful. Before leaving your ship, carefully examine the four colored docking ports on the alien craft. Give your suit to the Chief, then follow him through the maze to another docking port.

## PLANETFALL

This is a good introductory adventure for players who find *Seastalker* too simple. Puzzles are based on complexity, not obscurity. Several are color-coded. Watch out for red herrings, because there are plenty of them. Floyd *does* have to die before you can win. Check out the hole in the wall and the suspicious painting hanging in one of the offices.

## SUSPENDED

Here you control six robots who send information to you. Each has its own specialty; understanding and applying them correctly is the key. Iris is your vision, providing TV feedback of what she sees—so focus on fixing her immediately. The colors of the objects furnish clues on how to use them. If the humans keep catching you, trap them.

## INFIDEL

I found this one extremely difficult, though some people say they've solved it in a few hours. You're exploring an Egyptian pyramid, where hieroglyphics are written on the walls in the form of punctuation symbols (&\*@, etc.). They must be decoded, using the key included with the documentation as a starting point. It's one of the deadliest, so save your progress frequently in the pyramid. Carry every object you can, especially the mast. If you don't have a printer, copy all the hieroglyphics and decode them later. Hint: many objects have a single hieroglyph that is their name.

## DEADLINE & THE WITNESS

The mysteries employ a unique system of play. You must question the characters about each other and about certain situations. Following people and "hiding" is important, and it's vital to be in the right place at the right time. In both games, you must discover certain bits of evidence before a successful arrest and conviction. Mapping isn't too important. In *Deadline*, you must show a certain object to George before the will reading. There's also a secret passageway and a hidden safe. In *Witness*, be in the workshop when Monica gets home.





"I'm sorry, but we're looking for someone  
who can process words, not cheese."

# F-15 STRIKE EAGLE



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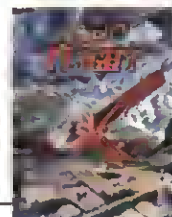
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*Smash* is great mindless entertainment. Everything moves very fast, and you need terrific eye/brain coordination. The intro music is worth the price of the game.

*Datamost, for Apple, Atari computers*

## MOONDUST

C

A hypnotic, hallucinogenic light show. Unless you are ready for something unconventional, stick with more traditional fare. Seven "ships" patrol the screen, all controlled by your joystick. You have to drop seeds and run over them, "smearing" the colors into the middle of the screen. The closer to the bullseye, the more points you get. (And the lights and sounds will make you want to turn off the lights and light incense.) A definite try-before you buy.

*Creative Software, for C-64*

## MOON PATROL

B-

You wander across the moon's surface, jumping over craters and shooting at anything that gets in your way. A touch of the joystick releases vertical and horizontal missiles. That's it—kind of a shooting *B.C. Quest For Tires*. Atari has faithfully adapted the arcade game, but there wasn't much of a game to adapt. Good game for beginners.

*Atari, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20, IBM PC*

## MOON SHUTTLE

D

The aliens are back in *Moon Shuttle*, a tired rehash of a tired Nichibutsu arcade game. Once again we move sideways and shoot up at five waves of Asteroids, "Expandos," "Blob Men" and other creatures. In *Moon Shuttle* they're very colorful and sometimes sprout lightning bolts when hit. Big deal.

*Datasoft, for Atari*

## MR. COOL

C

A *Q\*Bert* clone, and not one of the better ones. This time your enemies—fireballs—shoot out the side of the screen. If they touch Mr. Cool, he melts. The platforms are thin, so it's hard to see the target color. Also, you can't jump off the pyramid. It's addicting for a short time, but wears thin quickly.

*Sierra, for Atari computers, C-64, PCjr*

## MR. DO

B+

Your goal is to harvest red cherries in an orchard and destroy Badguys with your power ball or by dropping apples on them. The game is slow, but it has all the cuteness and polish of the arcade game.

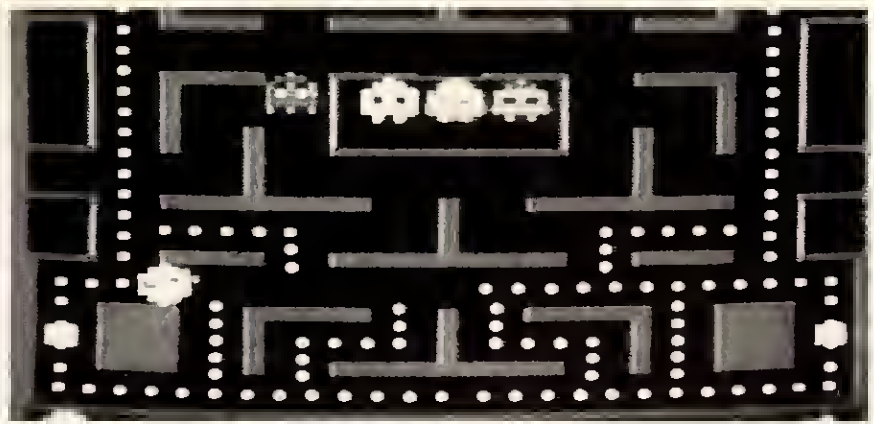
*Coleco, for Adam/ColecoVision*

## MS. PAC-MAN

CLASSIC

The greatest maze game of them all, faithfully adapted for home computers. It's all here—intermissions, multiple mazes, the theme song, and superb graphics and sound. Fruit bounces through the maze, and the ghosts' eyes even turn in the direction they are moving. You can start at any level you'd like.

*Atari, for Apple, Atari computers, VIC-20, C-64, IBM PC, TI99/4A*



*Ms. Pac-Man*

"You're Illuminer, a Druid magician. You must grow an army of trees and march them to the lair of the Necromancer."

## M.U.L.E.

A

This one has a "computerized board game" feel to it, like *Monopoly* in space. You and up to three others compete to colonize a planet, buying plots of land and developing them to produce food, energy and rare minerals. Action is joystick-driven, with lots of clever special effects. After each turn, you can auction off your goods or hold onto them and hope their value increases. After six turns the mother ship returns and the winner is declared. There are three versions, each more complex and challenging. In solitaire and two-player games, the computer plays, which juices up the auction action.

*Electronic Arts, for Apple, Atari and Commodore 64*

## MURDER ON THE ZINDERNEUF

B

If you love a mystery but don't have four months to devote to *Deadline*, give this one a whirl. You can shadow suspects, interrogate them and accuse them of the crime, but there are graphics and you use a joystick. The game lasts just 36 minutes, and at the end it names the murderer. And it's different each time you play. A bit simplistic for hard-core detectives, but fun for others.

*Electronic Arts, for Atari computers, C-64*

## MUTANT HERD

A

Use a pair of intersecting laser beams to push the mutants to the corners of the screen. At the same time, try to maneuver one of your men down a hole that leads to the mutant underground chamber. There you face a challenging ladder contest as you attempt to blow up the Mutant Queen and her eggs. Weird graphics, great sound effects. No shooting.

*Thorn EMI, for VIC-20*

## NECROMANCER

A

You're Illuminar, a Druid magician. Your weapon is a magic wisp that's thrown like a boomerang. You must grow an army of trees and march with them to the lair of the evil Necromancer. *Necromancer* is full of imagination and almost dreamy in its sound and graphics. It features three scenarios and is a perfect combination of action and adventure themes.

*Synapse, for Atari computers*

## NIGHT MISSION PINBALL

A+

Simply the best computerized pinball game around. The table's design is that of a WW II bombing mission, and you hear the bombs and machine-gun bursts as the ball rolls over certain parts of the board. Hi-res details and color are amazing. You can also "tilt" the ball, impossible with *Pinball Construction*. While you can't design your own games, it's easy to modify parameters like ball speed, number of balls, points and many others.

*Sublogic, for Apple, Atari, IBM PC and C-64*

## NIGHTSTRIKE

C

Your population centers are being bombarded by rockets and dive-bombing planes, and you've got to hold the fort into the night with a powerful but slow-moving tank. In addition to anti-aircraft guns, you've got flak shells to take out a couple of planes at once. The flares light up the sky like *Missile Command*. There are some brilliant colors, but it's one of those games you'll tire of quickly.

*TG Software, for Atari computers, VIC-20*

### PITSTOP

**B+**

An innovative driving game. Instead of crashing and miraculously getting a new car, you've got to pull into the pits every few laps to change tires and gas up. The race itself is no *Pole Position*—it's the pitstops that are most exciting. Valuable seconds can be gained or lost moving your pit crew around. Four players can play at once.

*Epyx, for Atari computers, C-64*

### PLANETFALL

As a lowly Ensign 7th Class onboard a Stellar Patrol ship, all you have to do is scrub the deck—until disaster strikes and you're marooned on an uncharted planet. Mapping the pair of scientific complexes there isn't as hard as in many of Infocom's all-text adventures, and some problems are easier. A warped sense of humor prevails. Hawaiian music "oozes" from the elevator, and Floyd, a laugh-a-minute robot, follows you around like a puppy. You'll sober up quickly, though, as the story unfolds and you realize what an interstellar jam you've stumbled into this time.

*Infocom, for all home computers*

### POLE POSITION

**CLASSIC**

The best driving game there is, period. The brilliant graphics nearly match the quality of the smash arcade game. But it's not as difficult, the signs on the road don't say anything, there aren't as many cars on the track and you have to drive with a joystick instead of a steering wheel. Shifting gears can be tricky. But if you are interested in a computer driving game, this is the first one you should buy.

*Atari, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20, IBM PC, TI99/4A*

### POPEYE

**A**

A terrific cartoony climbing game, much better than *Donkey Kong*. You are Popeye, attempting to win the affection of Olive at the top of the screen. Brutus is after you, and the Sea Hag is throwing bottles at you. Grab the spinach and kick their butts. You can also make a bucket fall on Brutus' head. Great fun!

*Parker, for Atari computers, Adam/ColoecoVision, 5200, C-64, TI99/4A*

### PREPPIE

**B**

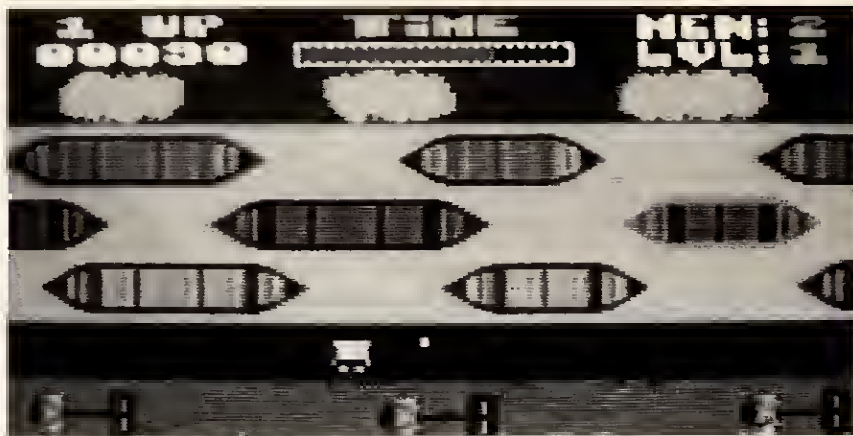
The first parody game. The action is almost identical to *Frogger*, except that you've got to get to the other side of the screen and return. Instead of piloting a frog, you control Wadsworth Overcash, a preppie. Wadsworth has to retrieve golf balls while avoiding lawnmowers and bulldozers. It's actually very funny—for the first few minutes. Bright graphics, cute music. And it's no pushover.

*Adventure International, for Atari computers*

### PREPPIE II

**B**

Most sequel games are tired rehashes of the originals, but *Preppie II* is actually fresher than *Preppie*. *Preppie II* puts our hero, Wadsworth Overcash, on three mazes where he must "paint" the floors by walking over them. This



*Preppie*

**"The computer will frustrate you in every way it can. It threatens to erase the disk if you stop playing."**

time Wadsworth has revolving doors he can use to trap the trogs. The game features nice bright graphics, cute intermissions and pause.

*Adventure International, for Atari computers*

### PRINCESS AND FROG

**F**

This is a copy of *Frogger* and a pathetic one at that. Since Parker Brothers and Sierra already make excellent versions of *Frogger* for the Atari, the last thing anybody needs is another one. Romox puts their games on erasable chips that allow you to go back to the store and have another game transferred onto them. With games like this, that may be the only redeeming quality.

*Romox, for Atari computers*

### PRISONER 2

**B+**

*Prisoner 2* is a subtle, difficult puzzle in which you have several goals: getting off the island where you're imprisoned; keeping secret a piece of information the guards are trying to extract from you; and above all maintaining your individuality in the face of psychological torture. To heighten the pressure, the computer plays tricks on you. You might type "N," only to see "T" appear on the screen. You'll

be offered a clue, only to find it was the same clue you got last time. The computer will frustrate you in every way it can, even, at one point, threatening to erase the disk if you stop playing.

*Edu-Ware, for Apple*

### PHOBOS

**A**

On a Martian moon, Phobos, you're piloting a ship that plummets straight down through the surface as you seek and destroy renegade Martians who've built bases there. Other targets include fuel tanks and deadly saucers and missiles. Smashing into *anything* is sudden death, but maneuverability is excellent. There are 16 levels of caverns to penetrate, and it gets harder to squeeze through the tricky cavern entrances as you zoom deeper beneath the surface. Color's outstanding; animation and sound are well-defined, too. Four skill levels extend the game's lifetime.

*Atari Program Exchange, for Atari computers*

### POGO JOE

**A**

A spectacular game for *Q\*Bert* fans. The gorgeous graphics, animation and play action even surpass the original "hosenose." You can alter the speed of the game. Each of the 64 levels has a new, weird name. You can smart bomb your enemies off the screen. Cute, clever, cartoony and an addicting joy to play.

*Screenplay, for Atari computers, C-64*

### OIL BARONS

**C**

This simulation of the oil business blends text and graphics. Plots of land are handed out or auctioned off by the computer, then marked with plastic counters on a big map-board that fits together like a jigsaw puzzle. Up to eight players compete to reach a monetary goal that is set by the computer. You can survey sites, drill or pass. If you drill or survey, an animated scene shows the drill boring into the earth or ocean. Strike oil and you'll get royalty checks printed onscreen. Two types of games (Classic and Reality) and the option of saving games to disk contribute to the game's lifetime. C-64 version is incredibly slow during disk access, even more so than most games



for this computer.

*Epyx, for Apple, IBM PC and jr, Commodore 64*

### **OIL'S WELL**

**A**

An incredibly addicting eat-the-dots maze game. You are sitting on a huge oil deposit, and you've got to get it out of the ground. Land mines and "oozies" will kill you. Goblets and "petromins" help your cause. You eat the oil pellets by uncoiling and retracting your pipeline through the tunnels.

*Sierra, for Atari computers, C-64*

### **OMEGA RACE**

**A**

High-powered conversion of the classic arcade game. Race around an oblong block where the score is displayed, firing lasers at Droid ships and mines they've planted in space. Lack of gravity is convincingly worked into action: you must wheel around and hit the engines to stop. Droids turn into Command ships if not knocked out fast enough. These become Death Ships, which release more powerful Vapor Mines.

*Commodore, for VIC-20 and Commodore 64*

### **ONE ON ONE**

**A-**

The ultimate schoolyard matchup—Dr. J versus Larry Bird. You can be either superstar, and you can play against the computer or a friend. Shooting, stealing, rebounding, hot streaks and instant replays are all part of the game. You can even slam dunk and shatter the backboard. The graphics are truly remarkable.

*Electronic Arts, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64*

### **PAC-MAN**

**CLASSIC**

The home versions don't quite match the arcade game. They move slower, and changes have been made in the board in order to fit it onto the television screen. The sound is also a bit weak. But it's still *Pac-Man*, and it's still the most addicting game in the world. If you're not already burned out on eating those dots, this one will do your collection proud.

*Atari, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20, IBM PC, TI99/4A*

### **PENSATE**

**A**

A strategy board game, *Pensate* can be maddening. All you must do is move your piece to the other side of the board. Each of the computer's pieces has a specific type of move for each move you can make. This theoretically makes it possible to outmaneuver the computer. Other options allow you to increase the difficulty level in several ways. An excellent game when you don't have time for chess but don't want to kill aliens or solve puzzles.

*Penguin, for Apple, Atari, IBM PC, Macintosh and C-64*

### **PEPPER II**

**A**

A good maze contest with unique characteristics. Instead of eating dots, you roam around "zipping up" rooms. There are four

mazes, three theme songs and terrific color graphics. You get chased by roaming eyes and a "zipper ripper." Score bonus points when you zip up rooms that have prizes in them. No violence.

*Coleco, for Adam/ColecoVision*

### **PHAROAH'S PYRAMIO**

**C**

Great idea—*Q\*Bert* jumps on a pyramid, so rip off the pyramid idea and concoct a story to go with it about Egyptian Pharaohs. In this one, if you complete the pyramid, you get to control Egypt. The graphics are very crisp and sharp here, but joystick control is nearly unplayable. It's too easy to fall off the pyramid. Stick with the original *Q\*Bert*, or try *Juice* or *Pogo Joe*.

*Master Control, for Atari computers*

### **PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET**

**A**

Create your own pinball games. Arrange the table any way you want—place bumpers, kickers and holes all over. Then paint the backglass with the title of your game. You can even adjust the gravity, speed and elasticity of the bumpers (but there's no "tilt"). No programming experience is necessary. This is the game that started the construction set trend.

*Electronic Arts, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64*

### **PITFALL**

**A**

A terrific game for action fans. *Pitfall Harry* is trying to pick up the treasures that are scattered over more than 200 colorful screens. Along the way he'll encounter tar pits, rolling logs, crocodiles, fires and snakes. The graphics are gorgeous and cartoony. The sequel—*Pitfall II*—is even better.

*Activision, for Atari computers, Commodore 64, Adam/ColecoVision*

### **PROFESSIONAL TOUR GOLF**

**B**

Two 18-hole courses are shown one hole at a time from an aerial view. The famed Pebble Beach course is a real killer; the second course is composed of the toughest and most unusual holes from courses like the Augusta National, Merion and Oakmont. Hi-res color graphics are excellent. You can select the type of club and strength of each swing. Keyboard control directs your shots. Each of up to four players can select from the roster of 20 pro golfers like Arnold Palmer, whose genuine characteristics are reflected in play. Or you can create your own characteristics and save them under a new name.

*Strategic Simulations, for Apple and C-64*

### **PROTECTOR II**

**B**

Like *Defender*? Crazy about *Choplifter*? You'll go bonkers over this. You've got to rescue 18 refugees in New Hope, all waving their hands as you fly over. Pick 'em up one at a time and deliver them to the far side of an intermittently erupting volcano. It you're not fast enough, an alien mother ship (why don't these games ever have *father* ships?) snatches the refugees and drops them into the volcano. There are also enemy meteroids, chompers, lasers and other nasty weapons.

Rescue all 18 refugees and the volcano erupts, devastating New Hope with lava. It's also fun to shoot all the refugees or drop them in the volcano yourself.

*Synapse, for Atari 400/800 with 32K*

### **Q\*BERT**

**A-**

A mostly successful conversion of the arcade hit. Hop your "hosenose" around the pyramid until all the cubes are the same color. Various weird and amusing enemies are chasing you. The home game lacks the incredible sound effects of the arcade game, and the graphics aren't nearly as good. But it's still fun to leap onto a flying disk and watch Coily fake a dive off the pyramid.

*Parker Brothers, for Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20, Adam/ColecoVision, TI99/4A*

### **Q-BOPPER**

**F**

A total ripoff of *Q\*Bert*, right down to the name. At first glance it looks like a good ripoff, but then you notice that your only enemies are colored spheres, the flying disks don't fly, and there's nothing to look forward to but more balls and color changes. Buying this game is the equivalence of piracy.

*Accelerated Software, for C-64*

### **QIX**

**B+**

An excellent adaptation of the arcade hit. Here there are four variations that will challenge both beginner and pro. In game number one you have one enemy and you only have to fill in 50% of the field. *Qix* is a very unique game that requires a lot of strategy. The game cannot be easily categorized—there is nothing else like it. Try it before you buy it.

*Atari, for Atari computers*

### **THE QUEST**

**A**

As King Galt's advisor, your mission is to accompany the fighter Gorn and slay a dragon that's devastating the land. After picking up the usual lantern, rope and other items, you'll stroll out of the castle in search of the elusive beast. The parser's exceptional for a graphic adventure: it accepts complete and even multiple sentences. Graphics are well executed, but an occasional object will be hard to make out unless you have a hi-res monitor. Tracking down the dragon may take months, but there's plenty of treasure to find and places to explore. More than 200 locations are waiting for you in this game, which takes up both sides of the disk.

*Penguin, for Apple*

### **QUESTRON**

**F**

An obvious knockoff of the *Ultima* series, this one features joystick control and a menu of commands on the left side of the screen. No keyboard-punching required. You're out to kill the bad magician. And the elves. And the trolls. And the dragons. And all the other beasts that attack as you wait around the hi-res landscape. You can visit cities and castles to buy gear, like in *Ultima I*. Who needs this? Buy *Ultima* and get the real thing.

*Strategic Simulations, for Apple, Atari and C-64*

### QUEEN OF HEARTS

C

Not the best computer pinball game. The ball doesn't feel like steel, it feels like rubber—bouncing crazily whether it hits a pop bumper, drop target or flipper. The ball is too elastic. While the game does have all the elements of real pinball, David's *Midnight Magic* and *Night Mission Pinball* are better pinball games.

SSI, for Apple, Atari computers

### RABBIT TRAIL

C

At last, a computer game with weasels. In this uninspired climbing game, you're a rabbit who has to hop to the top of the screen, hiding in rabbit holes along the way. After a short time, you wish the rabbit would just get run over by a car and be done with it. Strictly for kids.

Funware, for TI99/4A

### RALLY SPEEDWAY

A

Plenty of horsepower under the hood of this game: an aerial view of the track, the option to create your own courses, and the greatest two-player version of a racing game ever. You can zip around either of the two built-in courses in a solitaire game, too, after setting factors such as top speed, rate of acceleration, and road conditions (dry, wet or icy). This is the only racing game that puts both cars on the track simultaneously in two-player mode. If one car outruns the other to the point of leaving the screen, the second driver sustains a five-second penalty and the race takes off again from that point. Sound effects are superb, and the animation's lively.

Adventure International, for Atari

### RIVER RAID

B

A solid, mindless shoot-'em-up. From an overhead view, you fly your plane over a twisting river to blow up ships, planes and bridges. *River Raid* is a good way to get out your aggressions, but pales in comparison to the complexity of a game like Synapse's *Blue Max*. *River Raid* looks like a flat conversion of a good VCS game, which it is.

Activision, for Atari computers

### RIVER RESCUE

C

*Choplipter* goes upstream in this one, in which you steer a river rescue boat to pick up lost explorers from docks on the north bank, then drop them off on the opposite shore. You've got to avoid all kinds of deadly obstacles in the water: alligators, hippos and rocks. You get three boats with VIC, five with Atari. The VIC's graphics can't compare with those of the Atari, but the river in the VIC version is trickier to navigate. The sound is effective on both versions, and either one adds up to hours of action-packed joysticking.

Thorn EMI, for VIC-20 and Atari

### ROBOTRON: 2084

CLASSIC

Man has created robots so intelligent, they have decided that humans are unnecessary. Great concept. This is probably the fastest, most intense arcade game ever, and Atari has done a remarkable job translating the game



Rocky

"If you're sick of escorting frogs across the street, now you can shoot them and feed them to your family."

for home computers. Terrific shooting action. Caution: Apple version is very tough to control and C-64 version is uninspired. The Atari computer version is spectacular.

Atari, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20, IBM PC

### ROBOT PANIC

B

This game resembles *Robotron*, but the aliens only come at you from one direction, not four. Your laser cannon is on the bottom of the screen and nine different types of aliens rain down on you. Each has a distinct attack pattern. The deadliest are the pods, which release mutants when hit. Unlike most games of this type, *Robot Panic* gives you a double-barreled cannon, and you'll need it. The game is very fast.

Hes, for VIC-20

### ROCKY

A-

Press the yellow button on the Super Action Controller for a punch to the head. Red leads with a punch to the body. Purple blocks punches and blue causes you to duck. The scoreboard indicates the round, your level or daze and fatigue. You can be either Rocky or Mr. T., and until somebody releases a home

version of *Punch-Out*, this is one of the best boxing games you can buy.

Coleco, for Adam/ColecoVision

### SAMSON AND DELILAH

F

While the religious theme of this game is unusual and innovative, the play action is so dull and amateurishly programmed that it reminds you of the video games of five years ago. Don't waste your money.

Davka, for C-64

### SARGON III

A+

Packed with new features, this is the best computer chess game going. Unlike *Sargon II*, it lets you play a human foe as well as the computer. (Sargon referees, so you can't cheat.) You can take back a move, arrange the pieces in any position, and switch sides if Sargon gets you in a tight spot. Sargon has an opening library of 68,000 positions, the largest in a commercial game. You can also save a game to disk, print a list of moves and the board's current set-up, and use the programs on the second disk—107 classic games of the masters and forty chess problems on strategy and tactics—to improve your game.

Hayden Software, for Apple and Macintosh

### SAVE NEW YORK

B

Anybody can sing New York, New York, but are you willing to have dogfights with alien space mutants to defend the Big Apple? Birdlike creatures are literally eating the New York skyline in this one, and you've got to kill them with your rocket ship. Then you enter the subways and go after the baby mutants. Both segments fit on one screen. The idea is better than the execution, but it's a better than average shoot-'em-up.

Creative Software, for VIC-20, C-64

### SCORPION

B

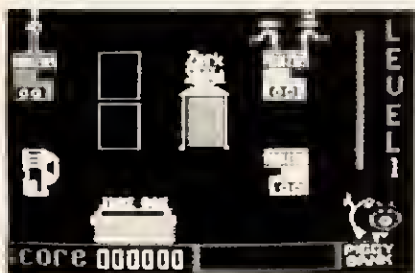
If you're sick of escorting frogs across the street, you can now shoot them and feed them to your family. *Scorpion* is an extremely fast-moving action/maze game. With eight enemies, you don't have to look far for something to kill. The maze scrolls all four ways and the radar scanner tells you where you are. Three difficulty settings, 32 levels.

Tronix, for VIC-20





Sewer Sam



Spare Change

### SEASTALKER

**B**

Infocom "junior-level" adventure for kids nine and older. You enter your name, which is used in the program by other characters when they talk to you. The scenario concerns your efforts to save an undersea Aquadome from attacks by a sea monster. You must learn to operate the *Scimitar*, a two-man sub, and sail beneath the sea to the dome. Beginners may like this game because it includes "InfoCards" with clues on how to solve the problems. A character called Tip Randall also offers advice. For first-timers only.

*Infocom, for all home computers*

### SEVEN CITIES OF GOLO

**A**

The New World is waiting to be discovered, and it's all yours in which to explore, plunder, find lost cities, kill and return to Spain to the acclaim of your countrymen. You can trade with the natives or just take their gold and mow them down *Robotron*-style. As you explore the Americas, the computer constructs the map. You can use the real world or the "random continent generator." *Seven Cities* is engrossing, educational and entirely joystick-driven.

*Electronic Arts, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64, IBM PC*

### SEWER SAM

**B**

One of the few talking games that doesn't require a voice module. Sam screams "ouch" or "oh no!" when attacked by a sewer nasty—crocodiles, snakes, sharks, bats and submarines. The graphics and play action are pretty ordinary, but this innovative soundtrack makes the game worthwhile.

*Interphase, for Adam/ColecoVision*

### SHAMUS: CASE II

**A-**

This shoot-'em-up is even more frenzied than the original *Shamus*. You've got to fight your way up ladders and across pits and lairs

"Written by Steve Meretzky, *Sorcerer* is one of Infocom's best adventures. The maze is a gem."

until you reach the top of this murderous underwater fortress. The shooting action is totally frantic, but the game's biggest asset is that there are dozens of caverns to explore, each one featuring a new and exciting problem. There is a pause feature that displays a map of your progress.

*Synapse, for Atari computers*

### SHERWOOD FOREST

**A+**

As Robin Hood, you win the heart and hand of Maid Marion. But she won't give you a second look until you've solved the eminently fair and logical puzzles that make this cartoony graphic adventure as much fun to figure out as it is to view. Spot animation and fast, fast disk access enhance the fun. (The C-64 version loads the next picture in three seconds!)

*Zoom Software, for Apple and C-64*

### SOLO FLIGHT

**B**

Like *Flight Simulator*, this one lets you fly a small plane. There are half as many controls to master. The key difference is in the perspective. Instead of looking out any of the cockpit windows while flying, you view the plane from behind—as though tagging along in a U-haul trailer. It detracts from the game's realism, but makes it easier for beginners because they can more readily see how control adjustments affect the position and altitude of the plane. You can fly in three states with 21 airports.

*MicroProse, for Atari and Commodore 64*

### SORCERER

**A+**

Belboz, leader of the Sorcerer's Guild, is missing. Apparently he's been snatched by an evil spirit called Jeeaar. An Enchanter, you can earn your wings as a Sorcerer or even become head of the Guild by finding him. You've got plenty of new spells and more interesting places to visit than in the previous game, *Enchanter*. The Twisted Forest, Fort Griffspot-

ter, and the subterranean world where you will find entrances to some of the places in *Zork I* are only a few such locations. Written by Steve Meretzky, it's one of Infocom's best adventures. The maze is a gem.

*Infocom, for all home computers*

### SPACE SENTINEL

**D**

As the earth turns slowly in center-screen, alien ships attack from the four corners. Controlling the "sentinel" that orbits the planet, you must zap them before they do the same to terra firma. Unfortunately, you don't get to do much controlling. The joystick only shifts the direction of your laser fire, so you can't move your ship at all. Sure, you circle behind the planet and back again—but there's no satisfying action involved in this game. Even more disappointing is the animation. Considering the C-64's capabilities, it's a shame to see graphics and animation that can't even compare with a lot of VCS games.

*T&F Software, for Commodore 64*

### SPACE TAXI

**A**

You've got to maneuver your taxi with short horizontal and vertical thrusts to pick up passengers and deliver them to landing pads across the screen. Magnets, shooting stars, narrow passages and black holes make the driving tough. Your score is registered by the money you earn. A good game for people with cool, precise nerves of steel. An added bonus is some of the best speech synthesis we've heard in a game.

*Muse, for C-64*

### SPARE CHANGE

**A+**

A totally wacky, weird and wonderful game. You are an arcade owner. The "Zerks" have escaped from their arcade game and are trying to steal your tokens. You've got to run around and collect them before they do. There are token machines around the screen, also pay phones, juke boxes, cash registers and a safe. You'll need them all. *Spare Change* is wildly original, non-violent and semi-educational, with a terrific demo mode, cartoons, arcade graphics and sound. One of the few games that makes you laugh out loud.

*Broderbund, for Apple, Atari computers, C-64*

### SPIDERS OF MARS

**A**

You're the Martian Fly, detending your planet against spiders and their winged allies. They attack from all sides using smart bombs and homing missiles. If the spider makes it to the surface, you're dead. The enemy attack in large numbers and their weapons are very accurate. This game is similar to *Defender*, but with more interesting enemies. True arcade action, great graphics and sound effects.

*United Microware Industries, for VIC-20*

### SPY'S DEMISE

**B+**

*Spy's Demise* is one of those games you just can't stop playing. The goal is to get your man to the top of a twelve-story building by running horizontally across each floor while avoiding

guards in elevators. When you reach the top of the building, you're rewarded with one line of an encoded message. After writing it down, you resume the game, this time starting your climb from the second floor. After each trip to the top, you get another piece of the message. Winning requires both coordination (avoiding the guards) and thought (decoding the message).

*Penguin, for Apple, Atari, C-64*

### THE SPY STRIKES BACK **A**

In this arcade-action sequel to *Spy's Demise*, you must track down Dr. X in his German castle. Guide the well-animated spy through the rooms, represented by boxes on the screen, to collect pistols and other objects for points. Dr. X's robot guards continually prowl the halls and will blast you with mini-nukes unless you hide in a room until they pass by. Each screen shows one section of that level, with five levels and over 120 sections in all. Pieces of a coded phrase appear in certain circumstances. Decipher the entire message and win \$100 in software from Penguin. (One winner in each state and foreign country.)

*Penguin, for Apple, Atari and Commodore 64*

### SQUISH 'EM **B-**

It's a ladder game. It's a maze game. It's two games in one! You've got to climb a 48-story building to reach a suitcase, white bricks, hammers and TV sets are hurled at you from above. There are also "Creepy Creatures" to contend with. *Squish 'Em* is a very simple, cute and addicting game, but strictly short-term fun.

*Sirius, for Atari computers, C-64, VIC-20*

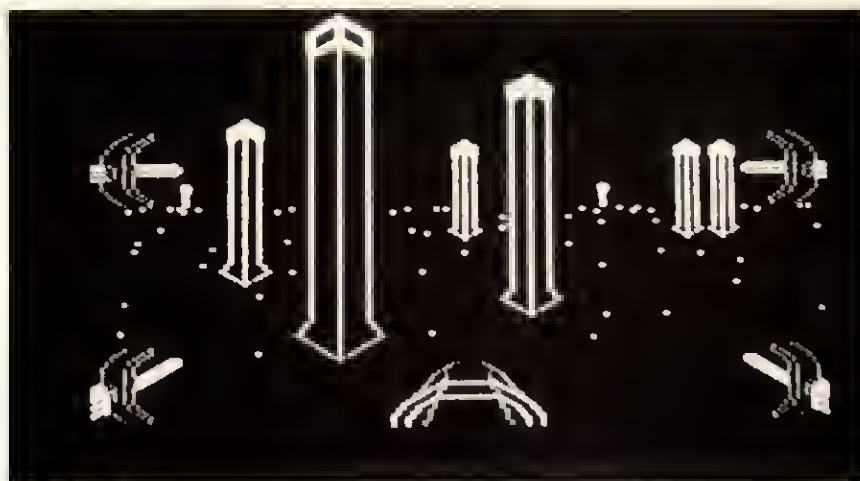
### STAR LEAGUE BASEBALL **A+**

This one won our "Golden Floppy Award" as Best Sports Game of the Year for 1984, and it's the one to take to the plate if you like action-oriented computer games. The animation and control over your team is excellent. Pitching, batting, stealing bases and other aspects of the all-American pastime are authentically and exactly executed in this knock-'em-out-of-the-park game. The only thing missing is a light-beer commercial between innings.

*Gamestar, for Atari and Commodore 64*

### STARBOWL FOOTBALL **B**

A one/two-player game offering "college" or "pro" skill levels, *Starbowl* scrolls horizontally in both directions to avoid cramping the entire field onto one screen. Both teams are represented by well-animated characters, the crowd roars, and there's also a musical half-time show. When you've got the ball, you coach by selecting (with joystick) the pass patterns and blocking assignments. Nearly 200 offense/defense options are available. Punts, field goals, interceptions—everything that happens in the Superbowl is possible in *Starbowl*. Play lasts an hour, and the teams switch goalposts for each quarter. *Starbowl*'s only snag is its tricky method of passing and



*Star Wars: The Arcade Game*



*Star League Baseball*



*Squish 'Em*

"The goal is to rescue Princess Sabrina, after fighting off rabid werewolves and bloody vampires."

receiving. Unclear instructions can make mastering this task quite frustrating.

*Gamestar, for Atari 400/800*

### STAR TREK **A-**

It doesn't have the vector graphics of the arcade game, but the play action has been preserved. The screen is divided three parts. This way, you can see your gauges (energy, photons and warp drive), a radar screen and a close-up view of the action at the same time. This is one of the best of the first-person shooting games.

*Sega, for Atari computers, C-64*

### STAR WARS: THE ARCADE GAME **C**

We loved the arcade game. This one looks like it but doesn't play the same. The guns on the edges of the screen never move, and you don't get that illusion that you are controlling the ship's direction. Instead of pointing your guns where you want to shoot, you just move a cursor around the screen. It's still fun, but no comparison to the original.

*Parker, for Atari computers, C-64, Adam/ColecoVision*

### SUBROC **C**

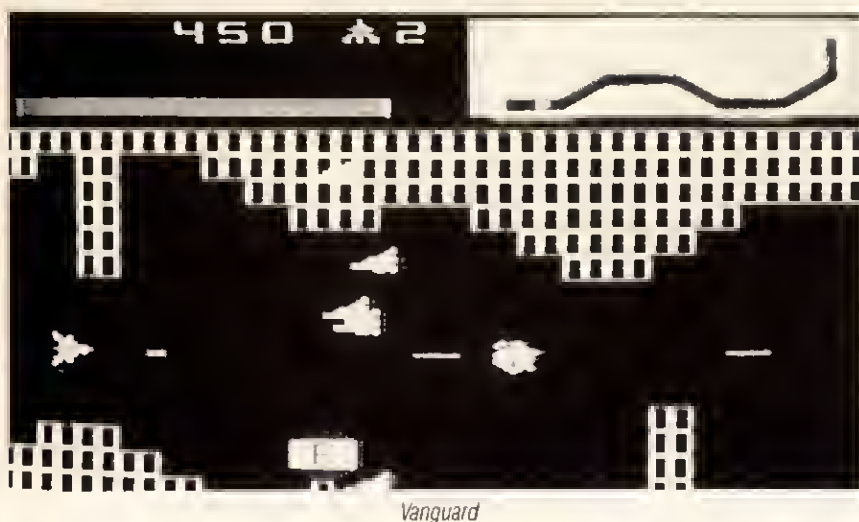
A pretty dismal attempt to recreate the excitement and incredible 3-D graphics of the arcade game. Fans of that game will be severely disappointed. But the home *Subroc* is not that bad by itself. It's a first-person shooting game in which you have to battle enemies in the air and underwater, during daytime and nighttime. It's a bit slow for a shoot-'em-up.

*Coleco, for Adam/ColecoVision*

### SUMMER GAMES **A**

One of the more mental of the Olympic decathlon games. Most events demand subtle timing rather than joystick jabbing. In the Diving competition, for instance, your diver takes a 30-foot leap and you control body position and rotation speed. The real Olympics are duplicated right down to the opening ceremonies. You can represent any of 17 nations, and all the flags and national anthems are in the program. Events: Pole Vault, Diving, 400-Meter Relay, 100-Meter Dash, Gymnastics,





"The old arcade game was never much to look at, and this conversion from Coleco is even worse."

Skeet Shoot, Freestyle Swimming Relay and 100-Meter Freestyle.

Epyx, for C-64

### **SUPER ACTION BASEBALL**

**A**

Even though there's no solitaire option, the Super Action Controllers make this one of the best baseball games around. The action buttons control pitch selection, runners and fielders. The keypad determines pitch speed, pick-offs and steals. The joystick modifies pitches, moves fielders and swings the bat. It takes a lot of practice to put them all together, but it's worth it. You get a close-up view of the pitcher and batter, with insets of the infield bases. Sound effects like cheering and whistling add to the excitement.

Coleco, for Adam/ColecoVision

### **TIME PILOT**

**C**

Coleco fell on their face on this one. While the arcade game was never much to look at, this conversion is even worse. It looks like an old VCS game. The play action isn't too bad though, especially with the Super Action Controllers. Insatiable shoot-'em-up fans may want to check it out.

Coleco, for Adam/ColecoVision

### **TRANSYLVANIA**

**A**

A classic graphic adventure that's as good today as when it was released in 1981. The goal is to rescue Princess Sabrina, after fighting off a rabid werewolf and a bloodthirsty vampire who chase you all over the Transylvanian countryside. Illustrations are excellent, and the double-hi-res versions for the Apple are outstanding. Its author wields a wry sense of humor. An intermediate-level game, it's also good for novices who want to tackle something tougher.

Penguin, for Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM PC & jr, Macintosh (double hi-res versions available for PC, jr and Apple)

### **TUBEWAY**

**B**

This will remind you of Atari's smash arcade game *Tempest*. Your ship is on the rim of a

geometric grid, and you shoot toward the center to prevent the aliens from reaching the edge. Speed is critical, because if you don't destroy all the aliens quickly, "the germ" will attack. Each of the 32 levels presents a new problem. The game moves slower than *Tempest* and lacks some of that vector sparkle. But since Atari hasn't converted *Tempest*, *Tubeway* is the best we have.

Datamost, for Apple

### **ULTIMA II**

**CLASSIC**

In this role-playing game, you're out to defeat Minax. The game boasts innumerable enhancements over *Ultima I*: graphics, sound, scenario, playability and virtually everything is noticeably improved. The most inventive element is its "time doors," which enable you to travel to any of five eras as well as to different continents and islands. You can also board a horse, ship or plane to move around the terrain. A rocket will even take your character across the galaxy. Richly colored maps of the land scroll in all four directions; when you enter a town, its streets and buildings fill the screen and also scroll. It's an original, well-packaged RPG that offers many weeks and months of high-caliber entertainment.

Sierra, for Apple, Atari, Commodore 64, IBM PC and jr, Macintosh

### **ULTIMA III**

**A**

Evil stalks the land of Sosaria once again in this final (?) installment of Lord British's epic role-playing adventure. Characters are created by choosing from five races (human, elf, etc.) and 11 types (fighter, wizard, etc.). But here you can form an exploring party of up to four characters. When moving across the terrain, they travel as one unit; in combat scenes, each is individually represented and controlled. Weapons and treasure may be swapped back and forth among characters. Different music accompanies each locale you visit, where the color graphics remain as impressive as ever. The interiors of dungeons and certain other locations are depicted with a 3-D effect instead of floor-plan-style as in

previous games.

Origin Systems, for Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM PC and jr

### **UPPER REACHES OF APSHAI**

**B-**

This disk contains data files that can be used only with *Temple of Apshai* to open up new worlds of role-playing that just don't come up to par with the thrills and excitement of the original scenario. It's supposed to be funny, as you find yourself being attacked by housewives and giant chickens, but the laughs run thin after a few minutes. Rooms are displayed with techniques that make it more difficult to map your progress. Characters created with the original game can be carried over and used here, but it's more fun to generate a new one.

Epyx, for Apple, Atari and Commodore 64

### **VANGUARD**

**B**

Travel through the tunnels of Aterria to destroy the deadly Gond. Along the way you fight off hordes of enemies, avoid the tunnel walls and pass different scenes. After using up your five lives, you are asked whether you wish to continue. If you answer yes, the action picks up right where you left off. Great shooting action. Beware: 5200 version looks good but plays bad.

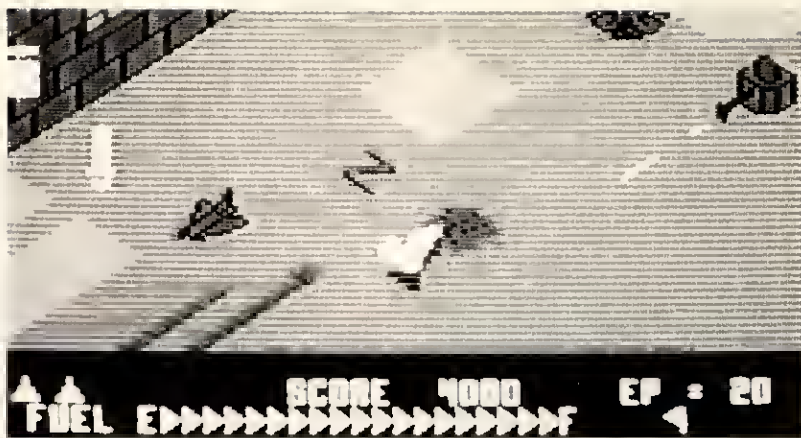
Atari, for Atari computers, 5200, VCS

### **VAULT OF THE CENTAURS**

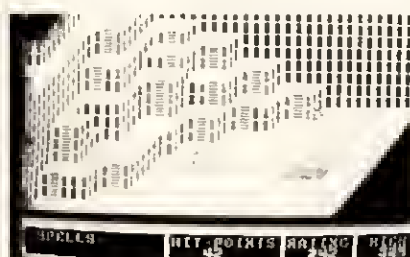
**A**

Maneuvering the starfighter *Nemus* between the openings of the force field that forms the Vault is no picnic, especially when you've got a pack of Centaur Warrior ships to blast into atoms first. But you must penetrate the Vault, destroy the even bigger Centaur Guard there and get the Zykon power supply inside. Rapid-fire and hyper-space keys help. Once you get the Zykon, you have to return across space to your home planet.

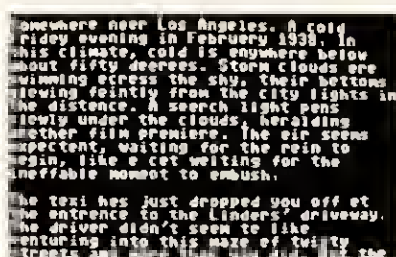
Orbyte, for Timex Sinclair 1000



Zaxxon



Zombies



The Witness

## THE WITNESS

A+

Before tackling *Deadline*, try to solve this mystery-adventure. It's easier, but still an entertaining "whodunit." Set in 1930's Los Angeles, the story arms you with a Colt .32 and provides an assistant named Duffy. Then you're dropped off at the front door of the Lindner house. The old boy gets away and even you—the sole witness—don't know who pulled the trigger. With a houseful of suspects to interrogate and a swarm of clues to find and analyze, you'll have your work cut out for you. Sophisticated programming techniques, authentic Thirties dialogue, anything-can-happen action and a prose style that's reminiscent of Raymond Chandler combine to make this an outstanding game for "disk drive detectives."

*Infocom, for all home computers*

## WIZARDRY

CLASSIC

The all-time tops in role-playing entertainment. Features a ten-level maze that must be explored in search of an amulet stolen by Wicked Werdna. You can create and store up to 20 characters, then take up to six at a time into the maze. Mac version was completely rewritten to take advantage of special features and super-detailed graphics. Two sequels, *Knights of Diamonds* and *Legacy of Llygarnyn*, can be played with characters created via this game.

*Sir-Tech Software, for Apple, IBM PC and jr, Macintosh*

## WAR ROOM

A

The screen is filled with a map of the U.S. and text detailing supplies of food, raw materi-

als, machinery and laser fuel. The nation is under nuclear attack, and you've got to save it. *War Room* is more than a shoot-'em-up. Food supplies and raw materials must be moved around to the areas that need them at the same time that you're blocking the incoming missiles. A spectacular strategy/shooting game.

*Probe 2000, for Adam/ColecoVision*

## WIZPLUS

B

*Wizardry* and its sequel, *Knight of Diamonds*, are two of the most popular fantasy RPGs for the Apple. But they take months to play and can get downright frustrating when you lose a favorite character. *Wizplus* is a utility that speeds up the game play. Characters that are dead, paralyzed or poisoned can

be restored to prime condition. They can be given weapons and gold. They can even have their experience level and hit points increased. The maps included in the user's guide show the locations of secret doors and magic objects.

*Datamost, for Apple*

## WORD FEUD

A

This one's got a lot going for it—a novel concept, effective sounds and four different versions. The object is to find the word hidden among a screenful of different-colored letters. With joystick or keyboard, you control an oblong "window" that must be positioned over the word (which appears twice onscreen). The various versions of *Word Feud* include something for every age group, making it a perfect game for the whole family.

*UMI, for Commodore 64*

## ZAXXON

CLASSIC

A remarkably good adaptation of this complicated arcade game. You fly a ship over a floating rock that is armed to the teeth with missile silos, jets and force fields. If you get past those, you fly into deep space and battle rocket ships. Then it's back to the asteroid, where Zaxxon the robot is waiting to blow you away. The three-dimensional field is beautiful, but like the arcade game, it's difficult to estimate your altitude.

*Datasoft, for Apple, Atari. Synapse, for C-64. Coleco, for Adam/ColecoVision*

## ZOMBIES

A+

Vividly colored 3-D mazes and dungeons make this a visual knockout, and the animation and gameplay are also top-notch. You must race through a dungeon's many rooms to find a crown, then return to the entrance and enter another of the seven different ones. Along the way, ghouls, snakes and other creatures chase you; contact with them eats away at your hit points. The creatures can't be killed, but you can slow them down by dropping crosses that they are unable to step over. Two players can be on-screen simultaneously and must cooperate for success. If one dies, the other can revive him.

*Electronic Arts, for Atari and C-64*

## ZORK 1, 2, 3

CLASSIC

These all-text adventures invite you to explore the Great Underground Empire. Originally a mainframe game, it was divided up into three scenarios for micros. In *Zork I*, you must collect 20 treasures and store them in a trophy case, fighting off the Thief every other move. *Zork II* is tougher, as you won't even learn its goal until halfway through the game. It has more of a fairy tale atmosphere and features a lively character called the Wizard of Forbozz. It's for advanced adventurers only. *Zork III* isn't quite as difficult and boasts the world's strangest scoring system. Newcomers would do better to start with a less complex game like *Mission Asteroid* before setting foot inside these often-baffling ruins.

*Infocom, for all home computers*



A large collection of board game boxes, including titles like 'Dreadnoughts', 'Panzer East!', 'TAC', 'Diplomacy', and 'Junior Mission 1888', arranged in a grid-like pattern. The boxes are of various sizes and colors, creating a vibrant mosaic of gaming themes. Some visible titles include 'Dreadnoughts', 'Panzer East!', 'TAC', 'Diplomacy', 'Junior Mission 1888', 'Golf', 'Football', 'Trivia', 'Breakthrough', 'Fighting Reef', 'Pitfall', 'Ramp', 'Mystery of the Nile', 'Panzer East!', 'TAC', 'Diplomacy', 'Junior Mission 1888', 'Golf', 'Football', 'Trivia', 'Breakthrough', 'Fighting Reef', 'Pitfall', 'Ramp', 'Mystery of the Nile'.

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Type of computer

# COMPUTER GAME BUYER'S GUIDE

By Shay Addams

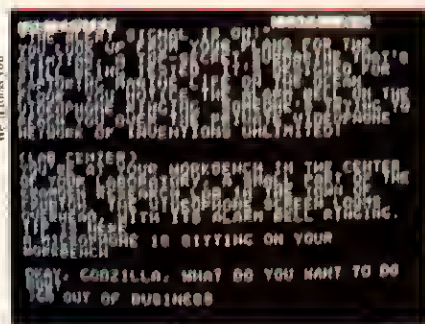


## ARCADE BOOT CAMP

B

Why not use a computer game to teach the skills necessary for victory in arcade games? Good idea, and it works. You can select from five training areas, each offering practice in a specific skill. There's a driving scenario, a helicopter game, a shoot-'em-up and two other courses. After giving it your best, you'll get some advice on what you've been doing wrong and how to improve your score. In the driving game, for example, you might be told to keep your eyes on the horizon as a means of spotting oncoming curves in the road. The goal is to advance from civilian to Sergeant Major, with seven ranks in between. Up to five "trainees" can enter their names and serial numbers, and their progress will be saved to disk. If you want to boost your scores, enlist today.

Penguin, for Apple



## SEASTALKER

A

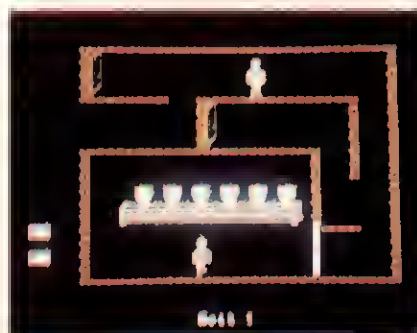
An Infocom game with joystick control? Well, almost. The joystick is the

steering wheel of the *Scimitar*, a two-man submarine. You operate it by typing in "north" or another direction, just as in a typical adventure. An Infocom game with graphics? More than almost. When the *Scimitar* cruises beneath the waters of Frobozz Bay, you can check the sonarscope and see a grid of dots on the screen. Punctuation symbols are used to represent the shoreline, shoals and ships you might run into at sea. Type "wait five turns" and the position of your sub shifts to indicate motion, a neat feat for Infocom. What else is new? You type in your name so the program can use it when other characters talk to you.

One of those characters is Tip Randall, who follows you everywhere offering advice on how to solve the immediate crisis. If his tips don't pan out, you can consult the "InfoClue" cards that come with the package. (Complete maps of all locations are also included.)

Infocom's first "junior-level adventure," *Seastalker* is best suited for novices nine years old and under. Experienced gamers won't find much to wrack their brains over.

Infocom, for all home and personal computers



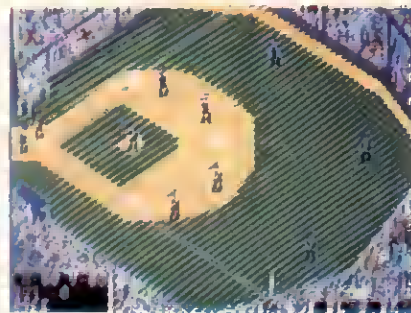
## BEYOND CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

A

Veterans have waited years for this sequel, and Muse is to be saluted for having the guts to draft Adolf Hitler into the plot and make this a thoroughly satisfying shoot-'em-up-in-a-maze game.

You've got to march your Allied soldier into Hitler's Berlin bunker, find the time bomb a confederate has hidden in a closet, and get past packs of stormtroopers and SS officers to plant the explosives in der Fuhrer's conference room. Each level is made up of assorted rooms with red brick walls. You can use keyboard, joystick or a combination to control your soldier, who must open chests for weapons, money, passes to get past the guards, and other gear. In addition to stabbing and shooting the Nazis, you can also bribe them. Nazi officers sit behind desks in some rooms and offer clues if you cough up enough marks. After setting the timer and planting the bomb, you've still got to escape the bunker before it blows. This feat will take more strategy and manual dexterity than *Pac-Man* and *Sargon III* combined.

Muse Software, for Apple and C-64



## THE WORLD'S GREATEST BASEBALL GAME

A

In many aspects, this surpasses our Sports Game of the Year for 1983, *Star League Baseball*. The animation is clearly superior. As they race around the field, the players' legs bend at the knee, their arms swing and you can even see their hands and feet move. Selecting the active fielder is accomplished with a logical pattern of fire button/joystick combinations that are quickly mastered. (It's no smoother than *Star League's*, though.) The big difference is that this



# REVIEWS

game lets you select from 25 genuine teams, including several World Series match-ups and All-Star teams. You can view the batting order, starting lineup and pitcher, and change these at any time during the game.

There are two games, the statistical version and "player control." With the former, you manage the team by pressing keys or using the joystick to tell your players when to hit and run, steal, bunt/sacrifice and make other strategic moves. The latter game lets you directly control the action. Six pitches are

available (not as many as *Star League*). There's also no shadow when the ball is pitched, which makes it more difficult to gauge the ball's position relative to the ground. You can steal, but everyone on base runs simultaneously. A display at the bottom of the screen always tells who is at bat and indicates the score, strikes, balls and other stats. To even out the odds in a two-player game, you can have both use the same team, the 1980 Phillies, for example. A one-player option is also on-board. Beginners can warm up by playing a team of rookies.

It's a great game, combining the best features of *Star League Baseball* with those of SSI's *Computer Baseball*.  
*Epyx, for Commodore 64*



## ARCHON II: ADEPT

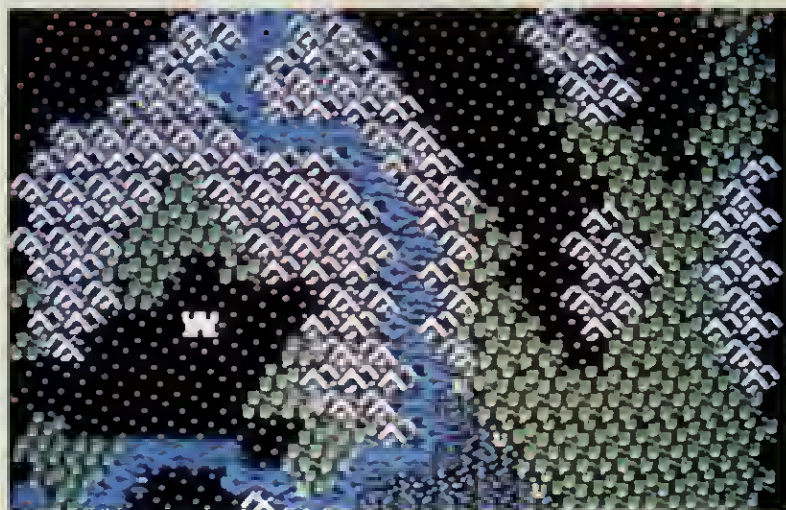
B

*Archon II* has less of the traditional board game feel exhibited by the original: its odd-shaped game field features unique qualities and only four "icons" (pieces) are on-screen at the outset. These are the adepts, powerful magicians who are adversaries in the war between Chaos and Order. Adepts can cast spells that weaken, imprison, banish and otherwise make life miserable for the demons and elementals that are magically summoned one at a time to help occupy the blinking power points. There are six of these, and all must be covered by a player in order to win. To complicate matters, four of the points shift positions every few turns. An adept loses magic points for each spell or action, and regains them when resting on a power point. Lose all your magic points or icons and you lose the game. And if you get too weak, the other side can hit you with the devastating Apocalypse spell. All action is smoothly orchestrated via joystick.

The screen is divided into four different-colored sections. An adept can place newly summoned demons only in the section he's in, but can teleport himself anywhere. When you move an icon onto another icon, the combat phase kicks in. The display is replaced by a less crowded one in which the two pieces fight it out arcade-style. This is great fun, slinging fireballs and other exotic weapons—especially in the two-player version. Adepts can change the direction of their missiles, so you can make a mid-course correction or even shoot around corners. Strategy is equally vital, though, making this a well-balanced scenario with sharp animation.

*Electronic Arts, for Atari and Commodore 64*

## COMPUTER GAME OF THE MONTH



## XYPHUS

A+

The role-playing game to play when you're playing more than one, *Xyphus* is six scenarios in one. The long-range goal is to track down and slay the demon lord Xyphus, but you must accomplish other goals in the preceding scenarios. Each one loads into RAM and never has to access the disk; when you've completed it, the next one can be loaded. Your "gang of four" is composed of Fighters and Spellcasters. They can buy weapons and spells in various forts and towns, where their hit and endurance points are automatically replenished—but can't perform magic without locating a xiphoid gem from the mountains or wilderness. They do *not* have to keep buying food, but can't trade weapons or pool gold. The emphasis is on developing each character by defeating the 60 different creatures in each scenario.

Certain aspects of war simulations make *Xyphus* truly unique: you can move

your characters in six directions rather than just four, and each one's movement factor is directly related to the type of terrain he's in and his race (elf, dwarf or human). Unlike *Ultima III* and *Wizardry*, *Xyphus* lets you move your monster-mashers individually at all stages of the game. They can even travel to widely separated regions; when it's time for a character to move, the display shifts to the area he's in. Best of all, a character isn't wiped off the scenario disk when he gets killed. This only happens when the entire party is wiped out, so you can remove the disk when the orc-slaying gets rough, reboot the game and start over from the last saved position. Each scenario takes 3-12 hours to complete, and they are progressively more difficult. *Xyphus* is easily the best new role-playing game of the year.

*Penguin, for Apple, Commodore 64, IBM PC and jr*

# REVIEWS

ONE ON ONE

## DECATHLON

(Activision, for C-64, Atari)



## SUMMER GAMES

(Epyx, for Apple, Atari, C-64)



VS



## TRACK & FIELD

(Atari, for Atari)

## HESGAMES

(Hes, for C-64, Apple)

ATHLETES AREN'T THE ONLY PEOPLE INSPIRED BY THE OLYMPICS. Certain blue suits saw the handwriting on the wall: the Olympics are the world's greatest games. A lot of people play computer games. Why don't we combine the two?

And so they did. In theory, all these games attempt to mesh the all too obvious Olympic selling point with genuine play value. Unfortunately, the mix is a bit one

sided—each game screams of crass commercialism and none offers enough solid play value to sustain long-term interest. I'm afraid that once the Olympic torches are doused, these games will get shelved along with the rest of your

dust collectors.

Of this group, only one, Atari's *Track & Field*, looks like a contender for, at best, a bronze medal. The rest will have to fight amongst themselves for the also-ran slots.

If you're looking for a game as physically

grueling as true Olympic competition, then the Activision *Decathlon* is your game. This program recreates the centerpiece event of the summer games—the Decathlon. A novel idea beautifully executed, *Decathlon*, as its name suggests, is really ten games in



## ONE ON ONE

one. But (and this is a big but) *Decathlon*, like all the Olympic games, will grow tiresome quickly because of its repetitive nature. The repetition isn't necessarily on the screen, but in front of the television. A peculiar joystick motion is required to complete each event, specifically jiggling the controller back and forth as quickly as possible. The faster you move, the faster your skin-and-bones athlete will move. For the first five seconds this technique is interesting, and tolerable for maybe ten. After that, it begins to decline in appeal.

Still, with all its faults, *Decathlon* isn't a complete washout. The shorter events such as the javelin, discus and shotput are fun simply because they are short and require only brief bursts of furious jiggling. The longer events, on the other hand, have little or no redeeming qualities. Why anyone would want to endure the excruciating boredom of the 1500-meter run (four to five minutes worth of jerking the controller) or the finger-contorting hurdle events is beyond me.

In keeping with the unofficial Activision policy on translations, *Decathlon* graphics have been improved. Gameplay is consistent with that of the earlier VCS version. Details have been defined here—you can see what appears to be a sea of heads in the bleachers, and the animation is a bit better. Other than that, *Decathlon* stands as VCS backwash, upgraded slightly to appease another audience.

Repetitive joystick movement also plagues *Hesgames*. In this program players compete in six events: the 100-meter dash, 110-meter hurdles, the long jump, archery, diving and two weightlifting events (the two-hand snatch and the clean and jerk). The three track events are simple matters—just jiggle the joystick for all you're worth. Archery is an even simpler aim-and-shoot affair, while diving casts you more as a coach than a participant. Ironically, no strength is needed for weightlifting. Timing is what counts.

The two most involved events, weightlifting and springboard diving, are interesting at first, but confusing. The trick in diving is to inform the judges what maneuvers you plan to execute. Oddly enough, once a dive is selected all you need to do is take off and time your entry. The somersaults are more or less automatic.

One cute touch: your skin glows red if a flubbed dive results in a helly flop.

In weightlifting there seems to be no relationship whatsoever between strength and the amount of weight lifted—it's all in the timing. A complete and legal lift consists of four joystick moves for the two-hand snatch while eight are necessary for the clean and jerk. A real curiosity, this little exercise stands as the most peculiar and illogical I have ever seen in any game.

*Hesgames* tried to correct one problem that plagues *Decathlon*, involving the fact that jumps and throws have to be initiated by the fire button, making graceful leaps and tosses nearly impossible. Here, everything is controlled by the joystick—a good idea on paper, but a miserable one in execution. In the hurdles, for instance, one must move the joystick back and forth to run. To jump, the stick must be held to the right. Finding just the right touch is the key to ensuring that the computer doesn't get your commands confused.

So that great performances may be saved and looked at again, *Hesgames* offers a Classic Replay option. Immediately after a record breaking performance, the user can save his achievement on disk. Admittedly, this is a novel idea, but not strong enough of one to justify buying *Hesgames*.

Success in the *Summer Games* requires more brains and less brute force with the joystick. But where *Hesgames* and *Decathlon* asked you to do too much, *Summer Games* asks you to do next to nothing. In the track relays, for example, you only need to adjust the runner's speed. Centering the stick causes the runner to move at a "normal" pace, while tilting it left will slow him to coasting speed.

One improvement over *Hesgames* is *Summer Games'* realistic renderings of both diving and gymnastics. Unlike *Hesgames*, *Summer Games* allows you to select the flips and twists in each dive. Both rotation speed and body position are joystick-controlled, making unique, one of a kind dives possible with just a few flicks of the stick. Gymnastics is similarly set up. Once the athlete vaults from the springboard to the horse, he or

she can select from two maneuvers: a full tuck or a layout. As in diving, the number of flips you can safely complete depends entirely on your takeoff.

Of the group, *Summer Games* offers the most pomp and attention to detail. You just don't control any ol' guy in this game. Your athlete can represent one of eighteen countries. Once you have selected an affiliation, you can then listen to that country's national anthem. Pretty spiffy, but that's nothing compared to *Hesgames*. In that contest you can have your athlete compete under any name you'd like. For instance, my player could bear my name and represent, say, Frank's Pizzeria. If that's not enough you can always change your athlete's shirt and socks (no, I'm not kidding) until you find a color that suits you. *Summer Games*, meanwhile, has ignored the picayune in favor of the grandiose. Just after booting the disk you are treated to an opening ceremony, complete with runner and lorch. Following each event is an awards ceremony, not to mention a champion ceremony that follows the awards ceremony for the final event.

The best of the bunch, Atari's *Track & Field* is repetitive and physically demanding, yet it is easier to play than any of the other games in this comparison. Packaged along with each cartridge is a custom controller unit similar in design to the button configuration on the Konami *Track & Field* coin-op. Instead of furiously jiggling a joystick, you tap the two "run" buttons. Jumps and throws are initiated by a separate switch on the center of the console.

Since *Track & Field* offers only short events (100-meters, the long jump, javelin, 110-meter hurdles, the high jump and the hammer throw), you do less tapping and more playing. My only gripe with this contest is the fixed order of events. Unless you can ace the hurdles, you'll never see the high jump or the hammer throw.

If you are looking for relatively solid play value, *Track & Field* looks like the best bet. Of the group, it is the only one that encourages you to push on, and in the process, see more. *Michael Blanchet*

# SWAP SHOP

*Due to Swap Shop's overwhelming response, and even though we've doubled the number of pages, it's become impossible to fit them all in. That's why we're compelled to now charge \$5 for ads, to ensure that people who most want to swap will get to see their ads in print.*

Adventurers! Clines and maps for graphic and Infocom games. \$4 each. Write for catalog. Ask Alice, Box 3074, Stony Creek, CT 06405.

Atari computer owners: Traders wanted. Bill Werts, 660 Susq. Ave., Kennon, PA 17764.

Coleco owners: I'm selling a brand new, never-out-of-box Expansion Module #1 for \$50. Chris Rohde, 1036 Burgess, St. Paul, MI 55103.

Sell or trade games for Atari VCS: *Skydiver*, *Surround Burglarmoon*, *Human Cannonball*, *3-D Tic-Tac-Toe*, *Outlaw* and *Combat*. Games I want in return: *Galaga*, *Gorf*, *Berzerk*, *Phoenix*, *Spiderfighter*. Pam Geis, Box 275, Williston, ND 58801.

For sale: Atari 5200 and 5200 trak-ball. \$115. Includes *Super Breakout*. Also selling 16 other carts: *Popeye*, *Pole Position*, *Baseball* and more. \$15 each. Catalog available for 50¢. Send check or money order to Mike White, 1704 N. Maplewood Ave., Tulsa, OK 74115.

For sale: VIC-20 with eight games, including five Scott Adams adventures and *Lode Runner*. Also, the VIC-20 Basic Programming book, *Compute!'s First Book of VIC* and *I Speak Basic to My VIC*. Commodore 16K memory expander for an extra \$65 if you want it. All of this, without the expander, only \$190. Matt Lindquist, 6345 Aldingbrook Cir. N., West Bloomfield, MI 48033.

Intellivision I games: *Carnival* and *Mousetrap*. \$5 each. Chris Iacomi, 6 Germantown Drive, Danvers, MA 01923.

For sale: 1 Atari VCS, 2 Wico Command Control joysticks, 2 paddles, and 11 games. Games include: *Spider Man*, *M. Network Baseball* and *M. Network Football*. Tom Cook, 493 N. Fox Hills, Bloomfield, MI 48103.

For sale: Intellivision II and Intellivoice

unit. Also 4 Intellivoice games and 30 others, including *Pitfall*, *D & D*, *Bump & Jump*, *Swords & Serpents*, *Football*, *Motocross* and *Burgertime*. All games still in boxes, have all directions and cables for hook-up. Will ship anywhere. Asking \$500 or best offer. Ken Walker, 3732 Live Oak St., Cudahy, CA 90201.

VCS and six carts for sale. Games include *Space War*, *Night Driver*, *Pac-Man*, *Combat*, *Frogger* and *Infiltrate*. Willing to trade for another game system or computer. VCS is in perfect shape. With all six carts, only \$50. Send check or money order to Martin Chavez, 808 W. Milan, Ennis, TX 75119.

Hey! Anybody interested in trading Atari computer music? If so, I'd like to hear from you. Jim Fletcher, 1906 W. Hampton, Fresno, CA 93705.

Atari 5200 and trak-ball with *Pengo* and *Ms. Pac-Man* for sale—\$150. Also have a ColecoVision with extra Wico lat-handle joysticks—\$100. Both in excellent condition. Also interested in meeting other gamers out there. Mike Knuffman, RR 2, Box 380, Warsaw, MO 65355.

Timex 1000 or 1500 owners: Am selling machine code games with superb graphics. See what your Timex can really do. Any two on cassette for \$15. *Invaders*, *Jetbomber*, *River Assault*, *Ghostrunner*, *Racer* and *Futurist*. Robert J. Midura, 19 Merrifield St., Worcester, MA 01605.

Make best offer: *Krull*, *Venture*, *Fire Fighter*, *Oink*, *Spider Man*, *Riddle of the Sphinx*, *Ice Hockey*, *Dragster*, *Burnstorming*, *Marander*, *Crypts of Chaos*, *Solar Storm*, *Videa Chess*, *Circus Atari*, *Robot Tank*, *Space Attack*, *Chase the Chuckwagon*, *Fishing Derby*, *Pac-Man*, *Dodge 'Em*. All for Atari VCS. T. Gross, 2203 Park Ave., St. Joseph, MO 64503.

Selling *Zork I* and *Beam Rider* on disk, *Gorf* on cart. \$10-\$20. These are for Commodore 64. Atari 5200 with 7 great

games, including *Dig-Dug*, *Pole Position* and *Moon Patrol*. Like new except slight damages on joysticks. \$225 or best offer. Atari VCS with problem on reset switch. Comes with over 25 games. Asking \$200 or best offer. Will trade these cussobs and games for any C-64 adventures on disk (Infocom series are welcome). Or for a used modem. J. Barclay, 108 Mundy St., N. Amherst, MA 01845.

VCS fans! *Superman* (\$5), *Missile Command* (\$10), *Asteroids* (\$7), *Maze Craze* (\$7), *Swaquest* (\$10), *Defender* (\$10), *Space Invaders* (\$7) and *Star Voyager* (\$5). Or best offer. Danny Liu, 11461 Ontario Circle, Westminster, CA 92683.

5200 owners! I'm looking for *Mario Bros.*, *Popeye*, *Baseball*, *Star Wars* the Arcade Game. Will trade *Pac-Man*, *Conga Bongo*, *Pole Position*, *Buck Rogers* or *Kangaroo*. Eric Shillinger, 408 West 1st St., Aberdeen, WA 98520.

Want to buy a *Starpod Supercharger* and cassette. Also have Atari VCS games for sale, including *Dukey Kong*, *Planet Patrol* and *Videa Checkers*. Robert Knight, 117 S. 15th St., Easton, PA 18042.

Commodore 64 games for sale: *Frogger* on tape, \$13. *Dinuzhin* on tape or disk, \$11. *Programming with Gertek* and the *Microchips*—two tapes, \$15 for both. *Buck Rogers* on cart, \$14. *Star Trek* on cart, \$13. T.A.C. on disk, \$20. Vincent DeMarti, 14864 Markese, Allen Park, MI 48101.

VCS games, cheap! *Berzerk*, *Dragster*, *Swordquest*, *Earthworld*, *Combat*, *Pac-Man*, *Asteroids*, *Skating*, *Frogger*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and many more. William Murjoy, 1217 Pineview Drive, Clinton, Miss., 39056.

ColecoVision with driving module, 10 carts and Adam computer module with digital data park, a word processor, letter-quality printer, keyboard and super game. \$600 or will negotiate. Charles Hutsell, Route 1, Box 158, Shepherd, TX 77371.

Commodore 64 owners! Will trade my *Lazarian* and *Tooth Invader* carts plus *Telengard* and *Introduction to Basic Part One* tapes for your *Lady Runner* cart. Also selling VCS carts for \$5: *Vanguard*, *E.T.*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Outlaw*, *Surround*, *Starmaster*, *Dukey Kong* and *Defender*. Send cash or money order. Bruce Tiffie, 6021 W. Fleming Rd., Atwater, CA 95301.

Apple owners: Grafix disk for Apple II.

Graphics, animation, a pinball game, an adventure game and word games—all on one great disk! Send \$8.00 to Jeff Peterson, 2772 Vine St., Orlando, FL 32806.

VCS People: Will sell *Atlantis*, *Infiltrator*, *Defender*, *Vintar* and *Pole's Soccer*. Also others. I have solution to *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, only \$2. Will sell games to best offer. Tim Van Raay, 2115 Winwood Dr., Appleton, WI 54915.

Wizardry Gamesters: Teleported into solid rock? Restore your characters with *Legacy Breaker*. Works with all three scenarios, multiplies everything but chevrons. \$20 for Apple only. Quantum, 106 E. Washington, Coleman, MI 48618.

Looking for people who want to trade Commodore 64 games for a month or two at a time. Also looking for a used 1541 disk drive for a good price. Stuart Watson, 40 Stoneyside Ln., St. Louis, MO 63132.

For sale: Atari VCS with two joysticks and a set of paddles. Carts: *Star Raiders* with keypad, *Asteroids*, *Berzerk*, *Breakout*, *Videa Olympics*, *Combat*. Also: VIC-20 with two programming books and *Jupiter Lander* cart. \$65 for Atari and carts. \$55 for VIC and set. Will also sell items separately. Willing to deal. Ben Kerwin, RFD #1, Box 1209, Benwick, Maine 03901.

VCS owners: Will trade *Miner 2049er* for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* or will sell it for \$17. Scott O'Hman, 1023 Cathcart Way, Stanford, CA 94305.

VII owners: I've written several programs that I'd like to trade for other home-written or public domain software. Send your programs on tape or disk and I'll return it with a similar number of my own programs. Wesley M. Allison, 11 Cottonwood, Box 149, Blue Diamond, NV 89004.

*Jump Man Jr.* cart for 600XL for sale or trade. Also selling an **Alphacom 42 dot matrix printer** with cables, asking \$110. Sui Chan, 2973 Bridge Ave., Bronx, NY 10458.

Want to buy Atari VCS or ColecoVision carts? I have *Frogger*, *Stampede*, *Berzerk*, *Yar's Revenge*, *Night Driver*, *Space Invaders*, *Demon Attack*, *Space Attack*, *Haunted House*, *Asteroids*, *Pac-Man*, *Combat* and *Defender*—all for VCS. For Coleco: *Mouse Trap*, *Venture*, *Zaxxon*, *Smurf*, *Popeye*. VCS carts are \$5, Coleco are \$10. John Keller, 1765 Meadowlark Lane, Anaheim, CA 92806.



**QuestBusters**—the only newsletter devoted exclusively to adventure and fantasy role-playing games—brings you in-depth reviews of all the new releases three months faster than any computer or games magazine. Subscribers can run a free ad requesting answers or hints, or to trade or sell games. A new puzzle in each issue gives you a chance to win a free game. Subscribe now, or slaverling grues will feast on your eyeballs. 12 issues, \$15. Sample copy, \$2. QuestBusters, 202 Elgin Ct., Wayne, PA 19087.

Intellivision 1 games wanted: Looking for an **Intellivoice** with *B-17 Bomber*. Will negotiate price or trade for some of my 11 carts. For more info, send SASE to Mitch Franchini, 3532 N. 3rd St., Harrisburg, PA 17110.

ColecoVision for sale. Also have expansion units #1 and 2, **Super Action Controllers** with *Baseball*, assorted Coleco and VCS carts. All in excellent condition. \$350 or best offer, or will trade for Atari compatible disk drive. Tony Rameo, 1011 Prospect St., Apt. #905, Honolulu, HI 96822.

Wanted: Any carts for TI 99/4A. Also looking for a **voice synthesizer** and joysticks. Sean Wells, 11915 Cotton Mill Dr., Lakewood, VA 22192.

AdventureDisk: Apple owners. Get a monthly double-sided disk full of hints, tips and solutions to all types of adventures. Also a different *Eamon* game each month. \$9 to start, then \$6 per month. AdventureDisk, Box 216, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

Atari owners: Just got an Atari 400 and am looking for hardware and software. Please send price if you have any of the following: 410 or 1010 recorder, \$35 Direct Connect Modem, or RAM expanders. Desired software: *Galaxian*, *Caverns of Mars*, *Star Raiders*, *Asteroids*, *Pengo*, *Qix*, *ET Phone Home*, *Missile Command*. Also looking for Vectrex *Space Wars*. Will trade Intellivision, ColecoVision or Atari 2600 cartridges for any of the above. Rich, 5859 Calamie Dr., Parma Hgts, OH 44130. (Also have solutions or clues to *Zork* series and *Starcross*.)

For sale: Atari 2600. With paddles and 21 carts. *Dankey Kong*, *Asteroids*, *Decathlon*, *Pac-Man*, *Real Sports Baseball*, *Space Invaders*, *Ice Hockey*, *Jungle Hunt* and *Pitfall*. \$450 value for \$125. Send check or money order to Steve Mihosavljevic, 406 Columbia St., Cambridge, MA 02141.

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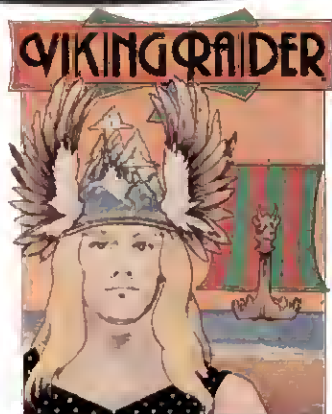
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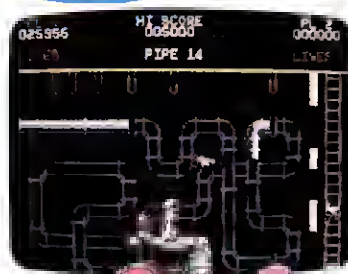
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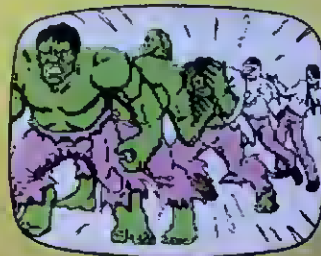
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